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Haunted Changes: How Cleveland's Segregated Landscape Shapes Aesthetic Agency and
the Social Life of "Real Jazz"

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Music

by

George Kaeser Blake

Committee in charge:
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George Kaeser Blake

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ABSTRACT

Haunted Changes: How Cleveland's Segregated Landscape Shapes Aesthetic Agency the
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This dissertation examines diffuse Cleveland jazz scenes as locations in which the confusing meanings and importance of race in the post-civil rights era are debated and enacted. An impossible contradiction at the core of the scene is that jazz is legitimated by its institutionalization and ascendancy on the cultural hierarchy at the same time that many of its new homes remain inaccessible to black people because of the continuing legacy and continuity of racial spatial containment. As a consequence, seemingly neutral questions of aesthetics and musical categorization are pitched to racial inflections. Through ethnographic research, I explore how the complex and sometimes incongruous baggage ascribed to jazz resonates on Cleveland's segregated streets and suburbs. The paradoxes built into Cleveland jazz show the fault lines between music's power to create new racial subjectivities and the entrenched material conditions of race.

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Preface: Inaudible Lives and Flyover Jazz

The first question people tend to ask on learning that I'm doing a doctoral dissertation on jazz in Cleveland, Ohio, is: "Does Cleveland have a good jazz scene?" My response is generally, "No, it's a flyover city, with flyover lives and a flyover music scene." Piqued by my sarcasm, they ask me to elaborate on what's wrong with the question, and I go on to say it reproduces logics of hierarchy and scarcity. Scholarly work is appealing to me because it creates a space for analyzing those logics, particularly as they are inflected by race: Is there an assumption about "who matters" that buttresses the evaluative criteria for "good" jazz? Is it possible for writers to challenge cultural assumptions that some jazz lives matter more than others? Are there ways in which constructions of "good" jazz can serve purposes that do not align with what is good for black communities? Besides, I'm more interested in the urban poor than in regional pride or territorial competitiveness. Promoting jazz with a view to boosting the city's image or attracting investment is likely to disproportionately benefit the middle class, and may even have a detrimental impact on the urban poor (Perry 2015). I love Cleveland, but instead of saying that Cleveland is better at jazz than other places, I'd rather devote my energy to questioning what people mean when they say "good" jazz, and explore how that category falls within the contemporary racial order.

Jazz, as Joel A. Rogers wrote during the Harlem Renaissance, is a "marvel of paradox" (Rogers in Porter 2001: 2). It contains multitudes and thus serves as a valuable entryway to understanding the disjunctive interpretations of the role of race in urban and suburban life. Because race operates in contradictory ways, the racial meanings of jazz need to be approached from different levels of analysis. I'm working to conceptually

welcome the incongruity and ambivalence brought into view by the generative discomforts of race, jazz and Cleveland.

After the “How would Cleveland fare in a jazz contest?” question, I’m asked if Cleveland can boast any world-class players. I respond by stating that there are indeed exceptional performers from Cleveland, but that this is not my primary interest. At least, I’m not interested in exceptionality in the traditional sense of the word. Framing the project around exceptional individuals would risk re-inscribing the values of institutional and commercial hierarchies. It would also play into our cultural tendency to pay attention to famous people merely because they are famous. I’m more interested in other questions: Who is able to participate in jazz and why? How do jazz communities in Cleveland define excellence and quality? How does the past haunt Cleveland’s present? What are the infrastructures of support for jazz musicians? How does jazz continue to be meaningful in Cleveland communities decades after commentators declared the entire genre to be dead? Since jazz has found a significant home in high school and university music departments, how does educational inequality shape the musical and racial meanings of Cleveland jazz?

Addressing these questions involves understanding jazz as located within unstable, contested political environments. By shifting between analytical registers, I seek to make what educator Mike Rose calls a “capacious critique.” This kind of critique “encourages both dissent and invention, anger and hope” (Rose 2009: 108). Jazz history is linked with the contradictions of American history. It is part of historian Edmund Morgan’s American paradox, which articulates how histories of liberty and democracy coexist alongside “oppression, exploitation and racism” (Morgan 1972: 5). By dwelling

in the uncertainties of this mixed legacy of repression and possibility, I engage the untidiness and multiplicity of “Cleveland jazz.”

By tracing different perspectives in this space of ambiguity, my research contributes to other important arguments that have been made in ethnomusicology and jazz studies about agency and group behavior. Jazz is black music (Jackson 2012) and black music does make claims on constitutive elements of American identity (Radano 2004). What’s more, groups of people join together to perform jazz from many walks of life to create virtual communities (Prouty 2011) and affinity groups (Monson 1996; Berliner 1994; Slobin 1993). My central question asks how the symbols of jazz community and possibility fare as urban inequality shapes jazz lives.

This is an ethnography that sets out to stage a dissonant dialogue. The field of ethnomusicology is a rich location for exploring contested meanings and contextualized affective responses, even as I shape the framing and organization of these perspectives. Important texts in anthropology (Fischer 1986) and ethnomusicology (Barz and Cooley 1997) have emphasized the partiality and subjectivity of the scholar’s point of view. Ethnomusicologist Tim Cooley states that ethnographers “often help invent the objects of our observation” (Cooley 2005: 9). Within this invention, a large part of my research seeks to underline the generative politics of disagreement across different points of view. The *Rashomon* effect is in play, and the category of “Cleveland jazz” has an array of competing definitions.

Introduction: Creative Programming

Like many of our nation's cities, we find Cleveland a teeming cauldron of hostility. The citizens of the Negro community reflect the alienation of the total community, which has constantly ignored their cries for justice and opportunity and responded to their joblessness, poor housing and economic exploitation with crude methods of police repression rather than compassion and creative programming.
—Martin Luther King, 1967 (in Trickey 2012)

In the last years of his life, Martin Luther King began to focus his attention more and more on the conditions of racial inequality in the urban north. Cleveland was one of the cities that concerned him. While King has been canonized as a key figure in change for racial justice across the nation and in Cleveland itself, the plight of the urban poor in the city of Cleveland never came to the kind of satisfying narrative resolution that is the hallmark of certain kinds of teleological historical imaginations regarding Dr. King and his work (Baca 2008).¹ King's challenges to the power structure in the city of Cleveland were very restricted. From the perspective of the trajectory of the civil rights movement, the city represents an unresolved set of changes. Like a series of chord changes that don't resolve, the civil rights movement remains unfinished. The listener is left hanging.

The conflicts over meaning in post-civil rights American society play out in the jazz scene. Basic descriptions are already fraught. This follows Salman Rushdie's assertion that "description is itself a political act." Rushdie goes on to state: "The black American writer Richard Wright once wrote that black and white Americans were engaged in a war over the nature of reality. Their descriptions were incompatible" (Rushdie 2012: 430). More recently, writer Ta-Nehisi Coates, a major public intellectual in politicizing economic injustice for African Americans: "I hope to make readers

¹ See (Baca 2008) on narratives of racial redemption in civil rights existing alongside narratives of decline through neoliberalism.

understand why those questions are critical. I don't so much hope that any reader 'agrees' with me, as I hope to haunt them, to trouble their sense of how things actually are" (Coates 2016). Edmund Morgan's *American paradox* (1972) is at work; narratives of integration and liberty coexist with narratives of segregation and inequality. In the same way that scholars argue over the meaning of America, with competing histories of inclusion and exclusion (Lipsitz 2005), Cleveland jazz musicians present differing ideas of what Cleveland jazz means. My research is an ethnography of these multiple perspectives, illuminating the gaps between jazz ideals and prevailing realities of structural racism. Jazz, for many Clevelanders, symbolically enacts such ideals as freedom and equality; yet other Clevelanders point to how the organization of urban life undermines those same ideals.

While the civil rights movement remade the racial structures of society in important ways, the victories were incomplete. Structures that reflect embedded racial injustice continue to shape agencies and structures of feeling that sacralize jazz as an emblem of freedom, equality and interracial contact, while remaining oblivious to the continuities of constraint, inequality and segregation shaping the present, including the jazz scene of the present. There are several studies about the relationship between jazz and the civil rights movement, including Ingrid Monson's *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa* (2010), Scott Saul's *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties* (2009) and Eric Porter's *What Is This Thing Called Jazz? African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists* (2001). This project seeks to enrich and expand that literature, engaging the relationship between the institutionalization and canonization of jazz in the face of the partial successes of the civil rights movement and

retrenchment against it—this project registers the changes, continuities and undecidabilities of racial inequality since the end of the 1960s. It builds on Hazel Carby’s critique of multiculturalism as being complicit with segregation (Carby 1992) and James Kyung-Jin’s reflection on urban communities facing material devastation even as multiculturalism functions as America’s “operative fantasy” (Kyung-Jin 2004).

In this regard, my dissertation is a modulation of Ingrid Monson’s *Freedom Sounds*, a text concerned with how jazz music during the civil rights era was deeply connected to the racial politics of that era. By transposing these concerns to the contested racial politics of the present, I ask how racial subject positions are articulated through music when there seems to be no agreement on the baseline of reality for what constitutes contemporary race relations. People celebrate jazz and its histories on various sides of the epistemological divide over the meaning of race and various sides of the racialized spaces of the metropolitan area. Monson’s powerful historical text obliges us to consider how racial redefinitions of self through jazz fare in the present.

Monson argued that during the civil rights movement, white and black musicians created “a sphere in which radical redefinitions of the self could take place—redefinitions that helped many musicians and their devoted audiences to break out of the socially imposed niche that U.S. society had defined for black music” (Monson 2010: 262). Jazz has played an important role in redefinition, even as structural racism risks monopolizing the scene, presenting a shifting positional-relational hierarchy that keeps certain injustices the same. By morphing Monson’s premise to the present, I attend first to the disparate life opportunities of white and black people, then enter into the new kinds of blurring boundary lines of self.

My conclusion to this strand in the argument identifies a disconnect between the legal and symbolic victories of the civil rights movement and the persistence of economic inequity and housing discrimination. Studies of black music risk obscuring the issues of equity at play by celebrating symbolic and theoretical change, and/or applauding the power of black music, while missing the continuing disempowerment of black communities through the toothless enforcement of the ideals realized in symbolic and legal form. Jazz can be used to protect a vision of American society without deeply assessing the continuity of injustice.

As scholars of the racial wealth gap, Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro note that we face a “mixed legacy of racial progress” (Oliver and Shapiro 2006: 11). In this context, music impacts race, and race has musical consequences. The way people recognize, misrecognize and negotiate borders in the Cleveland jazz scene is shaped by racialized societal hierarchies. Race doesn’t just happen through the embodied identities of jazz performers. Instead, jazz performers come into being within a racialized opportunity structure. Race also happens as people conceptualize the borders of what jazz is, and the jazz world reproduces racism.

Chicago historian Timuel Black states: “There has been and hasn’t been change; it depends on how you look at it.” Black states that the civil rights movement helped some in the black middle class access “desirable housing and schools.” However, access to housing and schools has been selective, and “those at the bottom are really no better off” (Black in Pearce 2012). Toward the last year of his life, Martin Luther King faced powerful resistance alongside violence during his battles in northern ghettos. In 1966, regarding his experience in the North, King states: “For those of us who came to Chicago

from Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama ... we found ourselves confronted by the hard realities of a social system in many ways more resistant to change than the rural South” (King in Pearce 2012). The question of continued Northern segregation and inequality remains occluded from most civil rights narratives. Although narratives of civil rights racial redemption circulate, King’s struggle in the North was just beginning at the time of his assassination (Smiley 2014). Indeed, scholars have shown how the decades since the civil rights movement have shown serious continuities in segregation, the racial wealth gap and other inequalities challenged by civil rights demonstrators (Keating 1994; Lipsitz 2006; Lipsitz 2011; Oliver and Shapiro 2008; Sugrue 1996 and 2008). The material rewards for segregation continue to impact the landscape, regardless of structures of interracial feeling held by individuals. George Lipsitz, in *How Racism Takes Place*, notes that “relations between races are relations between places...White identity...exists and persists because segregated neighborhoods and segregated schools are nodes in a network of practices that skew opportunities and life chances along racial lines” (Lipsitz 2011: 2). In this context, it is worth wondering what jazz’s ascendancy to canonicity has to do with the continuing trajectory of the democratizing forces of the civil rights movement. It is entirely possible to celebrate jazz as America’s national culture, while benefiting from the inequalities of America’s sorted-out cities.

The documentary *Icons Among Us: Jazz in the Present Tense* points out with its subtitle that jazz is not just a relic to be revered (Rivoira, Larson and Vogt 2009).

Thinking about jazz “in the present tense” involves thinking about how race matters in the present tense as well. As anthropologist John Hartigan notes, “Our present knowledge about race is weighted heavily toward how it has mattered in the past, but it is equally

important to be attentive to the new or developing ways that race matters or signifies” (Hartigan 2010: 192). Jazz in post-industrial Cleveland is a specific conjuncture nonetheless continuous with the past.

Since the age of the blackface minstrel show, American mainstream culture has been shaped by blackness. White culture is, in many important ways, always already constituted by blackness (Radano 2003). It’s just that the structural shape of opportunity remains inequitable along racial lines. Jazz has become part of American culture in a way that confounds a one-to-one connection between group power and genre power. Ingrid Monson, for instance, notes that black music doesn’t fit within Mark Slobin’s schema of “superculture,” “subculture” and “interculture” because it is a dominant music made by a marginalized group. Symbolic acts of cultural mixing within subjectivities and within groups are important, but their history can obscure the material forces rewarding segregation. Not all inclusions are created equal. America’s musical history provides significant evidence that white engagements with black culture are often limited and ambivalent. In *Sundown Towns*, for example, historian James Loewen writes about the “presence of the excluded.” A sundown town was a place where black people were attacked or chased out if they were around after the sun went down. By looking at minstrel shows within these towns, Loewen points to the presence of performed blackness within geographic spaces organized by explicit and brutal white violence (Loewen 2005). White people performing blackness and black music has not always translated into white people aligning with racial equality. Just as the minstrel show could accommodate the ambivalence of what Eric Lott calls *Love and Theft* (Lott 1993), the celebration of canonical jazz in the cultural sphere can occur alongside the reproduction

of material inequality. It is this both-ness—the material inequality of race alongside the ascendancy of a willing acceptance of black expressive culture—that outlines the paradoxes of contemporary jazz in Cleveland.

To add even more complexity to this problem, jazz circulates as a shifting referent. Different worlds of music take place under the heading of “jazz,” though there is little agreement about what belongs and what doesn’t. This problem is explored at length in the volume *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and Its Boundaries*, edited by David Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett and David Goldmark (2012). Jazz cultures in the anthropological sense of the word “culture” are often in tension with Jazz Culture, the institutional vision of jazz that is consonant with the high-culture project.

I’m interested in how jazz troubles concepts of self and other. For example, Nicholas Cook asks:

Is the work of Paul Berliner (1994) and Ingrid Monson (1996) on American jazz improvisation “musicology” or “ethnomusicology”? Both Berliner and Monson have an ethnomusicological training and have worked on African music; both are white and thereby distinct from the majority of their jazz-playing informants. To that extent, their work is marked by the classic Self/Other distinctions of a discipline whose very name embodies alterity: African/American, black/white, participant/observer, insider/outsider. But would it be different if Berliner and Monson were black, or if they were studying white jazz musicians? In a world of multiple and overlapping cultural identities, where do insiders stop and outsiders start? ... what music is left as the proper subject of the ‘musicology’ reserved for insiders? (Cook 2008: 63)

Here Cook assumes a premise in which jazz functions according to a clear binary of black self and white other. Yet he notes the difficulty of reconciling this question with an understanding of plural self-hood. His comments also point to the incoherence of the border between musicology and ethnomusicology, as well as the unspoken racial ordering of these fields.

Guthrie Ramsey contends that writing about black music “troubles the disciplinary boundaries among the subfields of music scholarship” (Ramsey 2003: 19). In Ramsey’s view, jazz is a subset of black music that troubles the lines between musicology and ethnomusicology. Racialized divides between self and other proliferate within the Cleveland jazz scene. Neither our analytical categories of race nor those of jazz allow us to fully engage with the way in which these categories are both fixed and fluid. There have been transformations, and there is much that has not transformed.

Jazz scholar David Ake notes that jazz album art in the United States started representing suburbia. Several artists formed a jazz that “runs alongside the music’s traditional urban centers yet remains safely removed from them, tracing a metaphorical migration for at least one segment of jazz and its audiences: the exodus to suburbia” (Ake 2010: 98). Building on Ake’s important observation, we need to look beyond the cliché of jazz as an exclusively urban musical form and note how shifts in demographics and urban space connected jazz to suburbia. Indeed, the sometimes awkward relationship between black urban jazz and suburban white jazz enthusiasts has a long history.

Understanding jazz discourse requires cognizance of the spatial containment of black people. As Mindy Thompson Fullilove notes, “Black America is an archipelago state, a many-island nation within the American nation. The creation of the archipelago nation had two consequences for African Americans. The first is that the ghettos became centers of black life; the second is that the walls of the ghetto, like other symbols of segregation, became objects of hatred” (Fullilove 2004: 27). Black people were able to construct spaces of congregation (Lewis 1991) within constricted spaces, even as the borders of the space were resented, creating an “ambivalent, love/hate relationship”

(Fullilove 2004: 27). A similarly ambivalent relationship exists in relation to the appropriate borders of jazz. The boundaries of jazz occur in a relationship between assertion on the one hand and constraint and exclusion on the other.

Jazz, as David Savran writes, has a “racially fraught history” (Savran 2009: 24). There is a significant amount of messiness, both historical and contemporary.² In fact, scholars have divided jazz based on the who as much as the what.³ Since jazz is widely seen as rooted “in the black social experience and in African-American aesthetics,” it is the musical genre “that most clearly represents resistance to (and triumph over) racial oppression” (Gennari in Savran 2009: 24). Writers such as Amiri Baraka, Stanley Crouch, Albert Murray, and Wynton Marsalis consider jazz as “essentially black” (Savran 2009: 24). Other writers, such as Gene Lees, Richard Sudhalter, James Lincoln Collier, and William Howland Kenney argue that the music is “essentially hybridized and multiracial” (Savran 2009: 24). Yet Nicholas Evans asserts that even historians “who proselytize for the multiracial character of jazz end up falling back upon essentialized categories and emphasize white and black cultures’ separateness” (Evans in Savran 2009: 24). “Purity in music may be ‘a myth,’ Ted Gioia cautions, but it is an extraordinarily resilient one” (Gioia in Savran 2009: 24). The disputes over the essential character of jazz take on a particular charge in segregated Cleveland. They also pose an interesting set of issues for defining the ethnographic object. Who is the essential authority on the essential

² Nicholas Evans writes: “From World War I into the 1920s, the lines separating what we now call jazz, ragtime, Tin Pan Alley, vaudeville music, and other relevant forms were quite unclear. . . . The emergence of ‘jazz,’ as such, was a messy, uneven, discontinuous process that itself was unclear—then, if not also now.” Nicholas M. Evans, *Writing jazz: Race, nationalism, and modern culture in the 1920s*. Routledge, 2015.

³ Charles Hamm has divided the jazz of the 1920s into three categories: “Jazz (and blues) performed by black musicians for black audiences,” jazz and blues performed by black musicians for white audiences, and “so-called jazz performed by white musicians for white audiences.” What’s interesting about Hamm’s categories is that genre becomes defined by the race of performers and audience. In his writing, genre is defined by who the people are (Hamm in Savran 2009: 23).

nature of jazz?

Cleveland has a rich jazz history and a sprawling jazz present. There is a proliferation of jazz musicians, from aspiring to retired, amateur to professional. The narrative in this dissertation is based on interactions with people I was able to connect with over my 2013 calendar year of fieldwork. These individuals frequent the ephemeral jazz scenes in suburban and downtown Cleveland clubs. For the most part, these respondents hold degrees in jazz, earn paychecks for jazz work, or regularly buy tickets for jazz events. All of them have a level of social power that enables them to regularly participate in this music culture. I have been able to connect with more than seventy Clevelanders in shaping this dissertation.

Although I began looking for one site, I found that “Cleveland jazz” is constantly emerging and receding across the greater Cleveland area. A few locations were constant jazz spaces, but most were not. Instead, I found that jazz spaces were often the spaces where jazz musicians played for the course of the gig. For example, I spent a significant amount of time following trumpeter Kenny Davis to his various gigs. Davis, who grew up in Cleveland, is an emblem of Cleveland jazz’s history and present; he performed in the old school of Cleveland clubs during the 1960s and continues to be a well-respected member on the scene(s), while mentoring aspiring musicians. Davis’s weekly gig schedule kept shifting, and it seemed as if he were on tour, except he returned to his home every night. His constantly changing commute gives a sense of how transitory and dispersed Cleveland jazz is. Although he performs alongside a network of musicians, these appearances were often in “non-jazz” venues: I saw him perform at a wine bar in Little Italy, a dance bar on East Eighth Street, a restaurant in a mall near a freeway exit in

the exurbs, and a private party at the black-owned Macklan Center in affluent, predominantly white Solon. Cleveland jazz emerges in fleeting spaces, with gigs often precarious and regular engagements frequently canceled. Similarly, I was planning on writing about Sammy DeLeon's weekly Latin jazz gig at Take 5, but that Sunday gig abruptly stopped. Jazz musicians are hidden throughout Cleveland, and they appear in unexpected places; for example, I tracked down pianist Dave Thomas playing a gig with vocalist Evelyn Wright at what I can best describe as a park bench between a restaurant patio and the outdoor eating area of a Ben & Jerry's. When I asked Wright what it's like to work in Cleveland jazz, she told me, "Well, you've got to find your niche," then gestured to the bench.

It's not only that musicians often face temporary contracts; jazz clubs themselves don't last long. Several musicians attempted to enumerate all the jazz clubs where they had once gigged that had gone out of business, but felt they were not doing the task justice because there were so many short-lived clubs to remember. Early in my research, I thought I would focus on the dynamics of the black-owned jazz club Opus in the integrated suburb of Shaker Heights, but the club went out of business before I was able to become a regular.

By organizing this dissertation around race, I'm pointing to the hidden jazz musicians and jazz audiences around Cleveland. This is a project that seeks to acknowledge "those who are being left out" (Smith 1977: 136). To borrow a phrase from Barbara Smith, I'm interested in "the vast wilderness of works that do not exist" (Smith 1977: 144). Writing about jazz means contemplating the conditions of possibility that have brought into being the jazz infrastructure and subjectivities currently on the scene.

These conditions are shaped at the interface between race and power. My interest in analyzing people's ideas about race and Cleveland jazz dovetails with my interest in understanding relationalities of marginalization (Roy 2003: 48). Of course, I can't write about a jazz scene that doesn't exist, but I can explicate how the current jazz scene is haunted by how it could have been different.

In *Cleveland Jazz History*, Joe Mosbrook presents a history of Cleveland jazz as a singularity. He writes about musicians in urban and suburban Cleveland alike, and includes musicians, like Art Tatum, who were not from Cleveland yet performed there regularly. He points out that there have been a number of clubs where the clientele was integrated. He also notes how white people often went to black neighborhoods and entertainment districts to hear jazz. Additionally, he highlights after-hours venues where black as well as white musicians would play. He mentions the bombing of a jazz club that may have been racially motivated. Likewise, he points out the history of the inequitable merging of Cleveland's two musicians unions. Writing about Local 4 and Local 550, Mosbrook notes how they merged in the early 1960s, after forty-five years of racial segregation. The American Federation of Musicians, Local 4, was one of the oldest unions in the country. However, as in most cities, Cleveland had a separate local for black people, Local 550. In the face of a financial controversy, the unions joined. Mosbrook notes: "It wasn't really a merger in 1962 and it had very little to do with racial equality. It was really a shotgun wedding prompted by suspicions of mishandled funds" (Mosbrook 2003: 181). Moreover, the joining of the two unions was financially punitive toward members of the black union. According to one member of Local 550, "Local 4 offered us \$25,000 for our building and the land, but we got only \$10,000" (Allen in

Mosbrook 2003: 181). What's more, Local 4 made all 275 members of Local 550 pay \$100 to join the union. According to trumpeter Kenny Davis, "Local 4 took the officers of Local 550 and put them in very subordinate roles in Local 4. They made these guys go out and check clubs. One of the checkers was Caesar Dameron" (Davis in Mosbrook 2003: 181). Dameron had been a leader in Local 550. Mosbrook writes that as late as 1991, "there was still no black member on the Local 4 board and resentment continued among some black musicians almost 30 years after the 'merger'" (Mosbrook 2003: 180-181). Mosbrook's contribution to the study of Cleveland jazz is an invaluable study. Through attention to local specifics, his work highlights how jazz history encounters complex racial politics. Yet despite these clear differences and stratifications, his text broadly constructs Cleveland jazz as one entity. The racial history of Cleveland, however, suggests that speaking of Cleveland jazz may be pretending to a commonality that is in fact fractured by racial divisions.

Spatial Marginalization

In Cleveland, the contemporary racial dynamics of the worlds of music that fall under the name "jazz" can be understood within an expanded picture of twentieth-century labor needs and the spatial marginalization of black people. The color-blind jazz narrative or the meritocratic narratives of jazz that emphasize black-white cooperation need to be connected to the material story of black people in Cleveland. This is one largely of subordinate inclusion in the city (De Genova 2017: 24). Black people were a necessary but exploited labor force. During World War I, Northern industrial centers faced a labor shortage. They lost a significant amount of labor power to the military. European

immigrant laborers were no longer available. Moreover, the federal government needed to mobilize additional labor for the war effort. In the face of this need for labor, black migration to the urban North accelerated. Manufacturing companies worked concertedly to bring black workers to fill positions previously held by employees who'd gone into the military. However, while Southern black workers were recruited for Northern jobs, they also faced seriously constricted housing and employment options, as well as limited access to public facilities and services. Black migrants were not able to access home financing or other forms of credit, could not live in many neighborhoods, work at many skilled jobs, or even travel across urban space freely.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the racial/geographic landscape changed. The number of black residents living in central cities grew significantly; the spaces inhabited by black residents in central cities expanded to a degree, but often resulted in crowding. Whites moved out of urban spaces. These white residents moved into housing that was underwritten by federal subsidies and mortgage insurance programs. Whites had virtually exclusive access to this form of mortgage support until the Fair Housing Act of 1968 made racial discrimination in housing illegal. A fundamental premise at the base of the Federal Housing Authority's underwriting standards was the idea, coming from the work of Frederick Babcock and Homer Hoyt, that racial integration decreases housing values. Consequently, non-whites were not able to gain access to the massive creation of new dwellings created after the war. The federal government orchestrated a spatial bias (Schill and Wachter 1995). Non-whites had access to older housing in what had been all-white neighborhoods. Homeowners in these areas did not have access to mortgage lending and insurance. The long-term consequences of these policies are vast and wide-ranging. They

point to the significance of how the geography was mapped by powerful actors, creating key structural impediments that prevented black people from developing wealth at the same rate as white people.

Mindy Thompson Fullilove points to an alternative view of the ascendance of jazz into art spaces. Her theory revolves around the destruction of black communities. She writes:

During the 1950s and '60s, a federal program called 'urban renewal' destroyed hundreds of African American neighborhoods, many of which were home to jazz, a music that flowed through the communities from home to street to club. The young kids learning to play would linger outside the clubs to hear the music, dreaming of the day they might participate. Major chunks of the jazz world—the Fillmore in San Francisco, the Hill District in Pittsburgh, and the South Side of Chicago, among them—were torn up by urban renewal, and the structure of home-street-club was destroyed. Jazz nearly disappeared in the United States, surviving by dint of becoming an academic subject in high schools and colleges, played in a few austere clubs in New York and other big cities. The fact that the music endured has much to do with Europe and Japan, which offered performance sites where musicians might hone their craft and earn a living. Japan is now the top consumer of jazz CDs and Tokyo a 'must stop' on a jazz ensemble's touring schedule. (Fullilove 2004: 16)

For Fullilove, community jazz didn't fade away as jazz became art; it was destroyed by federal policy. The communities that supported jazz were displaced even as jazz gained a footing in some powerful institutions as art. This divide continues to linger within the meaning of jazz in the contemporary context. Art didn't simply replace entertainment in jazz, as an evolutionary model of jazz history would have us believe. Instead, the resonances of art and entertainment are negotiated within everyday life. My ethnographic research suggests that ideas of art and entertainment continue to resonate with racial implications in the jazz world.

I'm attending to the obvious and not-so-obvious reality of change regarding

Cleveland jazz. In his analysis of the emergence of the theory of value, anthropologist David Graeber notes, “[T]he Western tradition marked itself by imagining objects that exist, as it were, outside of time and transformation. So much so that the obvious reality of change has always been something of a problem” (Graeber 2001: 50). I repurpose the word “haunting” to explain both the continuity and transformation of imagined totalities.⁴ Imagined totalities are transformed and not transformed, layered on top of each other. Thus, my ethnography took place in a spectral field-site. My actual fieldwork constantly ran up against prescriptive ideas of where jazz really exists, even if the exact qualities of “real jazz” could be difficult to pin down. An impossible contradiction at the core of the scene is that jazz is legitimated by its institutionalization and ascendancy on the cultural hierarchy at the same time that many of its new homes remain inaccessible to black people because of the continuing legacy and continuity of racial spatial containment. Thus, invocations of “real jazz” are always implicated in negotiations of the cultural hierarchy and the spatial hierarchy created by the geography of race. For the most part, then, I am delimiting jazz in a way that seeks not to authorize or reify a category, but to note how this category is mobilized in the co-constructed politics of race, space and genre.

In Cleveland, contemporary jazz communities are haunted by two ideal locations. On the one hand, the scenes are haunted by jazz as an ideal cultural space, a vital, black, community-based form. On the other hand are representations of jazz as “America’s Classical Music” (Taylor 1986), emerging from efforts to legitimate jazz in the terms of European art music. An entire spectrum lies between these idealizations, yet people make meaning in relation to these haunting discourses and are often trapped by this binary. The

⁴ See (Gordon 1997) for a thoughtful sociological study about haunting.

reality of jazz in Cleveland is that neither haunting fully exists. There is a limited black community club scene and pure aesthetic art objects do not exist outside of cultural processes and negotiations of power (Small 1998). Still, these two discourses of jazz culture and Jazz Culture may exist simultaneously, even within one person at the same time. They inform the ways in which people interpret and get entangled in the meaning and significance of jazz across a variety of other binaries, including:

- 1) White (space) vs. Black (space)
- 2) American freedom vs. American slavery
- 3) Art vs. Entertainment
- 4) Musician-oriented performers vs. Audience-oriented performers
- 5) Sitting still in the audience vs. responding kinetically and audibly to performers
- 6) Literacy vs. Aurality and Orality
- 7) American music vs. African American music
- 8) Having access and money vs. Not having access and money

Although the above binaries do not map cleanly onto each other, that of jazz culture vs. Jazz Culture haunts each of them. These binaries can coexist and compete with each other as the same person is speaking about jazz. They are limited in coherence and function to authorize situated racialized claims. In this context, for example, the institutional idealization of jazz can serve as a cover story and protection racket for American ideals that obscures the failure to realize those ideals in terms of racial justice.⁵

⁵ There is a long history of jazz functioning to symbolize America's values of democracy, freedom, equality and racial justice on a global stage that was nonetheless dissonant with the realization of those principles at home. See Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the*

The long history of white engagement with black music gives us good reason to be wary of any one-to-one celebration of interracial musical engagement as having any clear correspondence to racial justice.⁶ Still, jazz's institutionalization and prestige has its social uses for a variety of situated actors. I suggest that in Cleveland, when people speak about art, entertainment and jazz, they are also speaking about race.

Jazz serves as an inexact stand-in for race. In everyday speech, sometimes it stands for blackness, sometimes integration, sometimes American nationalism and sometimes universalism. Part of this instability has to do with the presence but invisibility of political whiteness (Lopez 2006; HoSang 2010). Depending on the context, genre does and does not serve as a proxy for race. Political whiteness shapes the framework of the jazz scene in metropolitan Cleveland. Whiteness, as George Lipsitz has argued, is an identity that provides “resources, power, and opportunity” (Lipsitz 2006: vii). The financial value of whiteness emerges from the profits individuals gain from housing markets that exclude people of color, provides greater educational opportunity for white people, secures employment through social networks, and accounts for the racial wealth gap.⁷

Though some of the elevation of jazz in the institutional ranks is a form of compromise with elite hierarchy, not all institutional formations function equally. There is a conflict between lived experiences of canon, along with its potted history and hieratic

Cold War, Harvard University Press, 2009; Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa*, Oxford University Press, 2010.

⁶ Greg Tate writes about white interest in black music and its failure to correspond to more inclusive social and musical practices. He also quotes Roger Guenevar Smith: “Why does everyone love Black music but nobody loves Black people?” (Tate 2003: 5). Charles Shaar Murray makes a similar point in (Murray 1990).

⁷ Whiteness is nevertheless “a delusion, a scientific and cultural fiction that like all racial identities has no valid foundation in biology or anthropology. Whiteness is, however, a social fact, an identity created and continued with all-too-real consequences for the distribution of wealth, prestige, and opportunity” (Lipsitz, 2006: vii).

scale of heroic jazz figures, in a context shaped by structural racism and “passive injustice” (Shklar 1990: 41). Thus, the “racial object” of this research stems from how the city is always already raced, due to decades of discriminatory real estate practices and federal housing laws. This history shapes different infrastructures of support for jazz identities to come into being.

The framework of this project revolves around studying social mechanisms of both inclusion and exclusion. The civil rights movement did bring about change, but social structures still produce exclusion. To deal with this methodological problem of thinking about democracy as inclusion through a narrative that necessarily excludes, to produce a narrative of inclusivity through a methodology of exclusion, I’m writing primarily about institutions and realms where exclusion happens. This involves distinguishing between forms of inclusion that make it possible to talk about exclusion and forms of exclusion that enable talking about inclusion. In *The Savage Mind*, the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss makes the point that history is always partial. For Levi-Strauss, “historical facts are no more given than any other.” As such, history “is therefore never history, but history-for. It is partial in the sense of being biased even when it claims not to be, for it inevitably remains partial—that is incomplete—and this is itself a form of partiality” (Levi-Strauss 1962: 258–259).⁸ The history-for that I am choosing is not the history of the most important but about framing the production of importance with an eye to who and what is excluded from narratives, neighborhoods and nightclubs.

What Does Jazz Have to Do with Race?

⁸ See also (White 1978).

The orthodox account of the evolution of jazz is that the music has its roots in Africa and ragtime and then progresses through a series of distinct, identifiable styles. Until the 1920s, New Orleans was the place for jazz; by the 1930s, swing took over. With the 1940s, bebop rose to prominence. Cool jazz and hard bop reigned in the 1950s, until free jazz and fusion hit in the 1960s. Textbooks tend to agree on heroic creators and great works, while foregrounding the music's connection to Africa. As Scott DeVaux notes, these books bring "a sense of triumphant reversal as the music of a formerly enslaved people is designated a 'rare and valuable national American treasure' by the Congress, and beamed overseas as a weapon of the Cold War" (DeVaux 1991: 526). This approach is ultimately reductive. It symbolically defines the perimeter of jazz, yet obscures the way people live at its borders.

There is a common idea in ethnomusicology of the relationship between the social and musical form, style and performance (Rice 2013: 24). By focusing on how structural racism produces different kinds of agency, I complicate clear-cut readings of the link between social structure and sound structure or race and musical form. A significant body of scholarship in ethnomusicology begins with the fundamental metaphor that sound structure and social structure are connected. Alan Merriam links musical structure to society in *The Anthropology of Music* (Merriam 1964). Daniel Neuman's celebrated study of North Indian classical music "rests on the assumption that music, culture, and society are somehow interrelated" (Neuman 1990: 27). Bruno Nettl has covered the "explicit relationship between the music structure and social structure of Iran" (Nettl in Neuman 1990: 27). John Blacking linked the Venda musical order to the social order on a variety of levels, including analyses of relations between individual and community,

theme and variation, and chief subjects (Blacking 1967). The risk of attending to musical detail as a way of finding expressions of the social is that one will instead find a natural group essence. That is, one will traffic in racial stereotypes. David Savran writes:

...many jazz critics inadvertently construct black and white as monolithic categories and in doing so, erase differences in social class, education, and region and marshal stereotypical characterizations of black music (which is coded as natural, highly rhythmic, and loosely constructed) as opposed to white music (which is supposedly more scrupulously organized both melodically and harmonically). (Savran 2009: 24)

In a parallel misreading, musicologists are frequently oriented along racial lines. As David Savran notes, some musicologists

who emphasize African roots tend to privilege rhythmic complexities (including those related to African dance forms), timbral idiosyncrasies and distortions, microtonal inflections, antiphonal structures, and 'jazz's functions as a form of communal bonding, ritual, and social interaction... a way of living in the world.' Those who emphasize European genealogies tend to focus on more formal questions: harmonic structure, melodic shape, modal and pentatonic scales, instrumentation, and the adaptation of European dance forms. (Savran 2009: 24–25)

It is not that these lines of argument are everywhere unjustified or uninteresting; but they produce a particular set of truth effects. Jazz told through histories of musical intermixture, with whatever emphasis, ought not to be confused with the contemporary demographic segregation shaping jazz.

Although the civil rights movement expanded equality for black people and led to a significant black middle class, empirical measures of income, incarceration, housing, life expectancy, and several other indicators point to the ways inequality and race are linked (Alexander 2010; Bonilla-Silva 2014; O'Connor, Tilly and Bobo 2001; Perry 2011; Shapiro 2004; Wise 2010). In *Living with Racism*, Joe Feagin and Melvin Sikes

point out that black people do not choose to remain segregated. Instead, they are contained within a segregated social situation as a consequence of racist real estate practices and white enmity (Feagin and Sikes 1994). Similarly, Steven Gregory's work on *Black Corona* specifies that the neighborhood is a "black community" because "through much of its history, its residents have been subjected to practices of racial discrimination and subordination that inextricably tied their socioeconomic well-being and mobility to their racial identity and to places where they lived and raised their children" (Gregory 1999: 10–11). The perspective also foregrounds the way discriminatory practices shape community.

This project enacts an ethnomusicology of metropolitan Cleveland. It's particularly about how Cleveland jazz is not contained within the city. Jazz musicians who live in Cleveland frequently perform in suburbs. Some of the most prominent musicians associated with Cleveland music live outside of the city limits. In 1978, ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl called for an "urban ethnomusicology" that emphasized the city as a place for musical connections (Nettl 1978). Playing with Nettl's idea, Jonathan Sterne wrote an article he classifies as "suburban ethnomusicology" about public space and the Mall of America (Sterne 1997). It includes an analysis of the boundaries between the urban and suburban. A metropolitan ethnomusicology helps to problematize narratives of discrete demographic groupings and enables us to engage with the interconnections between the suburbs and cities of the region. As Travis Jackson notes in his book on jazz in New York, *Blowin' the Blues Away*, the development of jazz was not simply a function of developments in musical style—it was also a function of developments in the *use of urban space*—the peregrinations of European American

‘cultural tourists’ to largely African American areas for entertainment, the continued movement of African American musicians (but not non-performers) to downtown performance spaces (which were presumably safer for middle-class white patrons) (Jackson 2012: 60). Historically, jazz venues functioned in what Kevin Mumford calls “interzones” (Mumford 1997), and the music developed through instances of different races from different places encountering one another, often in socially marginal spaces. This was true and continues to be true in certain parts of Cleveland. However, it needs to be understood against an analysis of the spatial containment of black people in the city.

Much ethnomusicology interrogates music-making as an activity that brings communities into being. However, the tendency to focus on active musicking as a way of enacting communities can understate the structuring roles of space and the material dimensions of community. In his work on Detroit, Thomas Sugrue argues that there is a material dimension to the construction of race:

Race in the postwar city was not just a cultural construction. Instead, whiteness, and by implication blackness, assumed a material dimension, imposed onto the geography of the city. Through the drawing of racial boundaries and through the use of systematic violence to maintain those boundaries, whites reinforced their own fragile racial identity. (Sugrue 1996: 234)

By putting materially based segregation in conversation with community in the form of active musicking, I shed light on issues of race and jazz.

Rather than a floating jazz community or the virtual jazz community outlined by Ken Prouty (2011), this project involves a view of community that is defined by physical geography. Race and geography are intimately connected. In the United States, race, as Don Mitchell notes, is “a geographical project” (Mitchell 2000: 238). Indeed, white and black identities are place-bound and, in an important way, space makes race. Geography

is a major part of how race “is made real on the ground” (Mitchell 2000: 258). With this approach, I follow Sherrie Tucker’s critique of nostalgically viewing the jazz community as a “color-blind liberal community where race never mattered and everyone got along” (Tucker 2004: 288). This perspective “erases the complexity of the social geography of lopsided integration” (Tucker 2004: 288). Whereas the “lopsided integration” approach celebrates whites who enter black spaces without attending to the inability of black people to enter white spaces, this study focuses on how lopsided integration emerges from structurally sanctioned segregation.

This is a community study and takes part in the debate about jazz and community already at play in the field of jazz studies. However, I approach many of the same issues from a different angle. While these studies engage with race in the jazz community, my approach engages with jazz in the racialized spaces of Cleveland. Ken Prouty, commenting on James Lincoln Collier, notes that he presented “a halcyon view of the jazz community as representing some sort of racialized utopia” (Prouty 2011: 18). Prouty points to Burton Peretti’s critique of the idea that jazz communities “worked constantly towards cultural integration and biracial understanding” (Peretti in Prouty 2011: 18). Here, the jazz community is formulated as a discrete sphere where communal connectivity reconfigures race. This framework essentially posits an interpersonal solution to a political problem. Integrated musicking can be criticized for many of the same reasons Patricia Williams criticizes the political potential of intermarriage; it “remains a romantic solution posing as a political tool” (Williams in Romano 2009: 291). American music culture is already “racially intermingled,” but, as Williams explains, like interracial marriage, it “won’t do much, if it fails to grapple with the complex histories

and causes of racial hatred and violence” (Williams in Romano 2009: 291). One way into these histories is by grappling with the connection of race and physical geography.

In the post-civil rights era, trying to not see race does not mean living in racial equality. Tricia Rose has argued that a “widespread belief in the *idea* of racial equality, and a visible symbolic brand of racial integration in mass media have worked to obscure the complex, intersectional, and entrenched reproduction of post–civil rights era color-blind structural racism” (Rose 2013: 448). Rose notes that black “urban poor communities are the product of a century’s worth of systematic discrimination, spatial containment, and targeted disaccumulation of community resources” (Rose 2013: 454). This “intersectional discrimination” impacts any notion of jazz community, nostalgic or otherwise. An important irony of the post–civil rights moment is that the redistribution of respect for jazz in institutions has not involved a redistribution of resources to racially and spatially contained poor black people, sufficient to enable them to participate in jazz’s legitimate institutions.

Project Overview

The first two chapters look at how the integrationist symbolism, improvisational possibility and anti-racist potential of jazz have been rendered weak by structural racism and the material rewards for segregation. Although “jazz consciousness” may emerge out of jazz practices, this shift in mind-set is a beginning, rather than an end, to the challenge posed to white supremacy. The possessive investment in whiteness is about embedded material relationships that are not immediately remedied by the existence of interracial audiences or racial justice ideals being publicly performed in concert halls.

I explain how divisions caused by the possessive investment in whiteness shape the divisions in Cleveland and in the jazz scene. I start with a jazz art concert in the late 1960s that was a fundraiser for the Ludlow community of Shaker Heights, an integrated neighborhood. I pay attention to the limited way in which the discourse of race was framed at this concert—as a question of difference, not of power. I then attend to how the possessive investment in whiteness continues to be felt in a self-consciously integrated neighborhood in which attitudes have largely shifted toward an integrationist mentality. Then, I turn to public schools. Here I look at discourses of race in relationship to access. My ethnographic notes point to different ways in which people understand jazz education in relation to race: as a subset of instrumental music in general, linked to questions of access. The choice to become a jazz musician is perceived as more available to people who live in certain neighborhoods and who are working with a baseline of more inherited wealth. Here, the material dimensions of white supremacy create a disproportionate representation of whites in the canonical jazz taught in many public schools. Jazz becomes an emblem of racial equality that is largely accessible to whites advantaged by structural racism.

Chapter 1 engages two concerts held in the Ludlow community at the edge of urban Cleveland. This chapter primarily relies on archival research about the Ludlow community. Ludlow was one of the first suburbs in the country to integrate. In 1968, the community hosted a concert featuring Ella Fitzgerald at Severance Hall. This concert symbolically merged the integration of the community with the integration of the concert hall, even as it framed race as an issue of difference, not an issue of power.

The second concert, “In Community with Ludlow,” was held in response to an instance of interracial violence in the community. During the concert people broadly linked the Ludlow community to the civil rights movement and integrationist symbolism. In many of these discursive moments, the importance of race was inconsistent and largely elusive, particularly the ways in which subsidies for housing segregation spatialized race.

In chapter 2, I consider what my respondents told me in interviews about Cleveland public schools and youth jazz pedagogy. Most of the conversations I had regarding these two themes tended to center on who has the choice to play jazz and who doesn't. The distribution of opportunity is imbalanced, with racial-group position as an important variable. The best jazz resources are not available in urban public schools. Even within suburban public schools, there are ways in which the possessive investment in whiteness accounts for the overrepresentation of white musicians playing jazz.

The next three chapters point to how people's ideas about smooth jazz, college jazz, and what I'm calling the “politics of concert hall respectability” are shaped by criteria for evaluating music which, in their turn, are shaped by racially inflected aesthetic hierarchies. Debates about jazz as art vs. jazz as entertainment appear with racial subtexts.

In chapter 3, I explore discourses about jazz clubs in Cleveland. I note how different ideas about clubs reverberate with racial resonances. This chapter particularly delves into ideals about what constitutes good jazz and appropriate audience behavior. It considers the disconnect between #blackculturematters and #blacklivesmatter. Black lives are not always welcome where black culture is on display.

Chapter 4 focuses on the contested category of smooth jazz. First, I outline the

disparate meanings of smooth jazz. I point to similarities and differences from conventional constructions of jazz. I also point to smooth jazz's connections to contemporary gospel music. Critiques of smooth jazz tap into fundamental differences in how people value music, inflected by the continuum of art and entertainment. In this section, I consider how discourses about "real" jazz have an unstable racial rhetorical edge, and how the people speaking about it are embedded within a segregated landscape. This racial rhetorical edge is often ambivalent, as jazz is both commended and critiqued for flowing to sources and influences outside of black America.

In chapter 5, I explore college jazz. I assert that when people make claims about college jazz, they invoke a series of binaries emerging from musicological thought and binaries keyed into Cleveland's urban jazz history. I contend that much hostility toward college jazz is inextricable from narratives about the fading of the club scene and the way in which institutions of higher education think about and value jazz. Considerations of college jazz face a problematic of no viable economic support for community-based jazz and viable support for the music in institutional spaces, often coded as white.

The Accompaniment

Throughout these chapters, I include sections called "the accompaniment." They're the rhythm section of the dissertation, the infrastructure of support that shapes how the other voices in the band are heard. Like a meeting of a drummer, bass and piano (vibraphone, guitar, etc.), the accompaniment includes a mixing of voices. The accompaniments in this dissertation largely constitute disciplinary encounters surrounding questions related to agency, art, autonomy, democracy and voice. How do

ideas in jazz studies depend on senses of the self as the one or the many? How do disciplinary collisions make visible implicit senses of what the embodied subject is and where agency comes from?

I'm invested in the feminist project of thinking of vulnerability and resistance together. Judith Butler writes about "the ways in which vulnerability can be an incipient and enduring moment of resistance. Once we understand the way vulnerability enters into agency, then our understanding of both terms can change, and the binary opposition between them can become undone. I consider the undoing of this binary a feminist task" (Butler 2014: 16). This depolarization of agency and vulnerability has important resonances with many forms of historical vulnerabilities, such as those outlined by Lipsitz (2011). However, a significant point of this project is about the strategic appropriations of autonomy, as well as the limitations therein. Whereas jazz studies has sought entryway into the halls of art, ethnomusicology has attacked the idea of music as only art. This distinction is not, of course, as clean-cut as it appears. Within the field of ethnomusicology, there's contestation over legitimating music as art within institutional spaces versus questioning the established institutional system of musical value (Averill in Solis 2004: 102). The accompaniment plays out a staging of what's at stake in the dynamic of minoritized voices claiming art alongside ethnomusicology's project of offering an alternative vision for valuing music.

One of the reasons for this accompaniment is that my intellectual adversaries in this project include unstated assumptions that circulate throughout scholarship and common sense. Autonomous, masculinist individualism and suspicion of pleasure or affect pervade some of the institutional expectations for studying jazz. There is the

problem of structure versus agency that pervades any historical account, plus the problem of partial representation of ethnomusicology. Above and beyond that, there is the problem of what improvisation studies can tell us about agency. My sense is that a key aspect of improvisation studies is its potential for pointing to how the future doesn't have to be like the past. Similarly, performance studies scholar Eve Sedgwick writes:

Because the reader has room to realize that the future may be different from the present, it is also possible for her to entertain such profoundly painful, profoundly relieving, ethically crucial possibilities as that the past, in turn, could have happened differently from the way it actually did. (Sedgwick 2003: 146)

The point of the accompaniment, then, is to examine the conditions of possibility that implicitly structure scholarship. One of the reasons I have included these conceptual interludes is to point to the limitations of the categories I have to work with, even as these are the categories I am working with. Language necessarily constrains us, even as it allows us to point to its constraints. The language of the past may trick us into thinking that the future can continue only in those terms.

Disciplines of the Possible: Structure, Agency and Value Across Academic Divides

By its very nature, this project on how jazz is valued and bounded is tied up with disciplinary traditions because academia has been an important site where jazz is legitimized and defined. In the emerging field of improvisation studies, the focus is on musical practices as a site of social modeling. Improvisation studies sustains an ethical model of difference that suggests the democratic, dialogic possibilities of improvisation. It asks important questions about responsibility, contingency and community (Heble 2013; Lewis 2004; Fischlin, Heble and Lipsitz 2013; McMullen 2010; Stanyek 2004).

My engagement with Black Studies and the sociology of race points to the

disconnect between appearances of equality and structured inequality. Some jazz scholarship also fits this realm, including Penny Von Eschen's *Satchmo Blows Up the World* (Von Eschen 2009), which points to how American jazz was employed to create an image of domestic equality and racial harmony abroad. Jazz was mobilized as propaganda to signify a degree of progress on the race front that had not been achieved. The Black Studies tradition has informed my thinking significantly as a scholar attending to the difficulties of understanding the role institutions play in structural racism and how this racism is kept concealed or unmarked (Lipsitz 2006; Shapiro 2004; Trepagnier 2006). In this role, I am playing the social scientist as discerner of hidden forces. Here agency can't be understood at face value because dominance is not just a matter of visible power, but of power over the frame of meaning.

The field of ethnomusicology is set up to sustain a capacious perspective. Ethnomusicology seeks to understand how music is meaningful and valuable to people. This leads to the discipline as a scene for playing out conflicts between multiple models and registers of musical value. No one's music has a superiority guaranteed in advance. Ethnomusicology nevertheless has a somewhat dissonant relationship to one of the primary trajectories of jazz studies, which seeks to legitimate jazz as art within the high-culture canons of Western art music. While ethnomusicological history includes a large focus on "non-Western" art musics, many ethnomusicologists are busy questioning and dismantling Western art canons. From this perspective, ethnomusicology is one of the key tools for understanding the rigid elitism of jazz elites, even as Black Studies attends to the importance of black people claiming jazz as figuring within the terms of musicological greatness.

In his introduction to ethnomusicology, Tim Rice reinforces Ellen Koskoff's position that the field has a "bedrock philosophy" in which "all people and all musics...have equivalent meaning [and value] to someone, somewhere" (Koskoff in Rice 2013: 115). Koskoff's statement about equality is ambivalent and confusing. It is a valuable idea because it mitigates the tendency to present "local knowledge" (Geertz 2000) as universal principles, even as it poses problems for moving from granular observations to larger claims.⁹ But doesn't the statement seem to relativize any notion of meaning and value out of existence? Likewise, doesn't it position the ethnomusicologist in a disingenuous position, equalizing all musics, even as the people playing those musics do not agree to the standard of capacious egalitarianism? How is it possible to theorize all musics as equal, if people playing particular musics find other musics to be inferior to their music? How can scholars adopt a tone of equivalence if the people they celebrate do not subscribe to that equivalence? What happens when people making a particular kind of music don't recognize the humanity of another group or its musicality? For his part, Levi-Strauss presented a solution in the form of a famous, if famously unsatisfying, contradiction: "The barbarian is first of all the man who believes in barbarism" (Levi-Strauss in Graeber 2001: 254). Where does this leave us in terms of our barbarous and not-so-barbarous ethnographic inventions? What disciplinary norms prevent us from attending to the disorganizing hauntings of social life?

⁹ Geertz does so through contextualization, comparative ethnography and a language of "master fictions" organizing a social order.

CHAPTER 1
Musicking Against the Ghetto Game and Performing Interracial Stability Against the Grain: Defying the Forces of (Re)Segregation

In this chapter, I propose that open housing activists mobilized music to create shared frameworks of meaning and structures of feeling in the urban North to perform the appeal of integrated living. This challenged norms established by real estate brokers, government agencies, mortgage lenders, and fearful white homeowners. The Ludlow Community Association succeeded not only in achieving integration, but also in maintaining it, staving off what W. Edward Orser calls “the trauma of rapid racial change” (Orser 1994: 1). In the 1960s, open housing activists seeking to challenge segregated urban ghettos faced a raft of discriminatory policies and practices; they also had to contend with what Dennis Clark called the “ghetto game.” In this game, white people would move out as soon as black people moved in, or threatened to move in (Clark 1962; Fullilove, Hernandez-Cordero, Fullilove 2010: 199). Unlike the explicit segregation policies of the South, segregation in the urban North functioned according to mechanisms that were largely invisible, even to many people complicit in re-creating them. Home ownership was construed through the lens of free choice and hard work, with racially discriminatory political mechanisms and public policy buttressing residential segregation largely obscured from view (Sugrue 2008: 206). Some housing activists in the urban North mobilized concerts to perform a public counternarrative of the viability of integrated living in the face of the ghetto game. Ludlow concerts in 1966

and 2008 performed symbolic integration in the concert hall as part of the fight against forces undermining integration in the landscape.¹⁰

Writing about New Orleans in the early twentieth century, Matt Sakakeeny states that as “laws and codes sought to segregate public accommodations into black and white spaces, music defied segregation in its volume and plenitude” (Sakakeeny 2010: 5). Defying segregation in the northern housing market required more than music reaching beyond racialized spaces. After all, jazz is a music that is enjoyed across significant social and geographical boundaries (Slobin 1993: 49; Peretti 1997: 9). Yet the challenge to white flight and the ghetto game was enhanced by mobilizing music to perform a narrative of integrated stability.

Writing in 1973, a member of the Shaker Heights Housing Office, Kay Marcoux, notes that racial integration “in housing has been described as that brief span of time between the arrival of the first black and the departure of the last white” (Marcoux 1973: 1). When a neighborhood becomes integrated it has historically involved “panic selling, declining city services, segregated schools, and a withdrawal on the part of white real estate brokers” (Marcoux 1973: 1). Shaker Heights was an exception to the persistence of Northern racial segregation from the late 1950s to the present. The community is one of many sites where pioneering black home-seekers risked the threat of anti-integrationist violence to enter a broader housing market—outside of urban ghettos—with the

¹⁰ Thomas Sugrue writes: “From 1920 through 1990, patterns of black-white segregation hardened in most of the United States, despite shifts in white attitudes about black neighbors, and despite the passage of local and state antidiscrimination laws and the enactment of Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act (1968) which prohibited housing discrimination nationwide...in metropolitan areas with fragmented governments and school districts, overwhelmingly in the Northeast and Midwest, racial segregation rates have remained particularly high. The reasons are varied, but they reflect the long-term effects of discriminatory patterns that date to the early twentieth century” (Sugrue 2009: 101–102).

accompanying better access to schools, jobs and amenities. It is a suburb built by civic activists contesting the splitting of regional Cleveland along racial lines.

Integrated communities long faced a business and government model of exclusion, buttressed by violence and cultural fears. Stable integrated communities were—and continue to be—remarkably rare.¹¹ The forms and practices of the past continue to exert pressure on the present. Integration in the Ludlow community of Shaker Heights has long been remarkable, delicate and in need of defense. The 1966 Ella Fitzgerald concert performed an alternative narrative to business common sense and common fears regarding housing integration. The performance of the concert symbolically crystallized the vision of open housing supported by members of the community who wanted to live in a steady integrated neighborhood. It was part of citizen activists fighting against the widespread perception that integration was unwise and unstable. The concert aimed to present a feeling of interracial community in opposition to a cultural norm that presumed white suburban homogeneity was safe and desirable for personal and financial reasons. A related constellation of issues reemerged in 2008 and prompted the Ludlow Community Association to present another concert. Although the first concert took place before the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the second occurred decades later, US suburbs continued, in general, to be organized around racial segregation (Sugrue 2008; Lipsitz 2006; Lamb 2005).

Numerous scholars point to the role of jazz in the civil rights movement (Hall 2001; Monson 2007; Saul 2003). Burton Peretti notes that “no music has been more intimately linked with the search by concerned Americans for legal and social equality

¹¹ Sheryl Cashin states that according to a conservative estimate from a 1998 publication “less than 4 percent of Americans lived in stable integrated surroundings” (Cashin 2004: 42).

for all, particularly for African Americans” (Peretti 1997: 4). Jazz’s connection to the black freedom movement was preceded by its role in undercutting the logic of segregation. Charles Hersch asserts that in early twentieth-century New Orleans, jazz subverted segregation because it “arose out of and encouraged racial boundary crossings by creating racially mixed spaces and racially impure music, both of which altered the racial identities of musicians and listeners” (Hersch 2007: 5). Likewise, significant work exists on the role of jazz in creating spaces that are more integrated than larger society. For example, Patrick Burke attends to interracial collaboration and tensions on Fifty-Second Street in New York in the 1940s and 1950s (Burke 2008). A similar environment existed in Cleveland. Kenny Davis, one of the most well-respected musicians in Cleveland jazz, remembered that the area around Cleveland’s University Circle in the early 1960s “was like a smaller version of New York’s 52nd Street... You would always see musicians walking along the streets with their instruments and you’d see well-dressed white people walking up and down Euclid Avenue. Nobody would ever bother them because they knew they were there to play and to listen to the music” (Davis in Mosbrook 2003: 120).

Yet another body of literature points to the segregation of jazz in the United States. Travis Jackson considers the role of race and space in a context of shifting economic policy: “As bars and clubs presenting live jazz in African American neighborhoods, unable to depend on the leisure dollars of industrial workers, grew less numerous, they were replaced by venues in whiter, more affluent areas, ones that could pay even poorly compensated musicians more money” (Jackson 2012: 66). David Ake writes that in the States, “ethnicity often defines the boundaries separating the various

jazz communities” (Ake 2010: 135). Likewise, Harris Berger’s ethnography of Cleveland jazz suggests a consistent possibility. Writing in 1999, he notes that Cleveland has several jazz scenes divided predominantly along racial lines. In his fieldwork, Berger found that African Americans tended to emphasize “that the scenes are sharply differentiated by race, but most of the European American players were either unaware of the differences or disputed their existence” (Berger 1999: 78). This is consistent with the larger social science finding that white people and people of color tend to view the state of racial relations differently.¹²

I follow Sherrie Tucker’s critique of nostalgically viewing the jazz community as a “color-blind liberal community where race never mattered and everyone got along” (Tucker 2004: 288). This perspective “erases the complexity of the social geography of lopsided integration” (Tucker 2004: 248). Whereas the “lopsided integration” approach celebrate whites who enter black spaces without attending to the inability of black people to enter white spaces, this paper focuses on how jazz was mobilized as part of an effort to maintain the integration of a precariously integrated suburb. To be clear, this precariousness was endemic to all integrated suburbs because of embedded legal and economic factors promoting segregated housing, combined with racial fears.

Integrating Ludlow was not simply a matter of inculcating new racial values among residents—it also involved engaging government, the real estate industry, and facing fears about the decline of property values. Construing the civil rights movement in a broad sense, we might follow Carl Nightingale in noting that “the revolution against

¹² Sugrue notes: “In 1988, 87 percent of whites believed that ‘in the past twenty-five years, the country has moved closer to equal opportunity among the races,’ whereas the number of blacks who believed the same steadily declined between the 1960s and the 1980s from between 50 and 80 percent to 20 to 45 percent” (Sugrue 2008: 507).

urban segregation in the United States was a movement of ordinary, courageous people seeking housing in neighborhoods where they were not welcomed” (Nightingale 2012: 387). It should be noted, however, that Shaker Heights not only made it possible for black people to move into the neighborhood; after this was successful, they sold to white homebuyers to maintain integration, obstructing the pressure exerted by real estate brokers toward promoting residential instability in the face of integration.

Suburban Ethnomusicology

Music articulates and mediates our relationship to other people and other places (Stokes 1994: 3; Bohlman 2002). It can create a link between people across distant geographies and a shared aesthetic among people who are worlds apart, but only miles away. It provides a means of reflecting on the shakiness and resilience of group boundaries. This chapter mobilizes the concerns at the heart of Martin Stokes’s collection *Ethnicity, Identity and Difference* to consider the suburb and its relationship to the city. In so doing, I expand urban ethnomusicology, with an eye toward suburban ethnomusicology or an ethnomusicology that attends to the relation of urban and suburban topics.¹³ Informed by the new suburban history and the new regionalism, this chapter situates the suburb as a contested multicultural space.¹⁴ New critical work on the suburbs moves beyond the stereotype of the suburb as a homogeneous conservative bastion. Although incisively engaged with the structural exclusions that shape suburban life, this generative literature helps us approach the suburbs with a fresh lens (Niedt 2013;

¹³ See Sterne (1997: 27) for a reflection on “suburban ethnomusicology” as an expansion of urban ethnomusicology in (Nettl 1978).

¹⁴ See Cashin (2000) for a consideration of how a local framework can undercut efforts to challenge segregation and “entrenched advantage.” Segregation spans across cities and suburbs into a regional issue.

Wiese: 2004; Kruse and Sugrue: 2006). A suburban ethnomusicology can explore the immanent contradictions of the suburb as a site of power and exclusivity, along with an understanding of the complexities of suburban spaces that don't match the stereotype.¹⁵ Indeed, the distinction between city and suburb is blurring. Many older suburbs near cities suffer a decline alongside the city, while new forms of urban development take on suburban characteristics. A bright, clear line separating cities and suburbs has faded and blurred. Still, fragmented local governments ensure that they compete. The difference between a city and a suburb is primarily a political distinction (Kruse and Sugrue 2006: 5). Suburban or regional ethnomusicology expands the frame for the already mingled, layered urban ethnomusicology by attending to interaction and contestation between localities in close proximity.¹⁶ In short, ethnomusicologists need to consider the suburbs because housing presents key insights into racial inequality, segregation and white identity (Oliver and Shapiro 2006; Lipsitz 2006).

Many social practices were at play in sorting out the city and suburbs by race. One of the most outrageous is violence, though this extremist violence was largely in line with standard bureaucratic practice in stifling racial equality. The formation of the American suburbs in the middle of the twentieth century included a profusion of examples of white suburbanites performing violent acts to discourage African American settlers in white communities. It was what Arnold Hirsch calls "an era of hidden

¹⁵ The idea of "musical community" is a valuable one in this proposed approach to suburban music. After all, the suburbs have been described as antithetical to community (Putnam in Nicolaides and Wiese 2006: 492–495).

¹⁶ Consider Johnathan Stock: "An urban ethnomusicology is likely to be marked out from the investigation of smaller-scale, non-urban venue by the degree of consideration it gives to the historical record. It will have to cope with the heterogeneity of the city, where multiple, overlapping musical communities are intermingled, and musical networks criss-cross one another temporally, socially, physically, and electronically" (Stock 2008: 201).

violence” (Hirsch 1983: 40). Whites responded to people of color broaching the color line with threats, property damage and violence. As Andrew Wiese puts it in his study of African American suburbanization, when “it came to race, arson was as suburban as the backyard barbecue grill during much of the postwar period” (Wiese 2004: 100). Jeannine Bell uses the label “anti-integrationist violence” to describe violence aimed at people of color moving into white neighborhoods and violence aimed at people of color already residing there. She notes that perpetrators of violence act with the same motivation of white people who reject integration: “the protection of property values” (Bell 2013: 116). Violence in suburbs involved not just a question of liberal racial views, but engaged the question of whether white people would be willing to share the benefits of collective white prosperity.

“Suburbia,” Thomas Sugrue writes, “represented the merger of identity and interest” (Sugrue 2008: 206). White people believed that white neighborhoods were all the things they thought black ghettos were not: affluent, safe, organized and well-run. Sugrue writes: “Efforts to provide blacks with equal housing opportunities touched a raw nerve not just because whites were fearful of having black neighbors, but because whites were unwilling to share their tax dollars and the benefits those tax dollars bought” (Sugrue 2008: 207). The mechanisms of housing discrimination have long been obscured by the ideology of hard work and free choice. As a result, many white people viewed residential segregation as part of the natural order, rather than as the consequence of public policy. Racial identity and localism merged, since local political institutions distributed public goods. Jeannine Bell notes the paradox that “while many whites may be more tolerant of interracial interaction, for many this still does not extend to sharing

neighborhoods with minorities, particularly African Americans” (Bell 2013: 116).

Surveys of white housing choices suggest that they support integration in theory, but are against living in integrated neighborhoods (Bell 2013: 116). The issue of suburbanization is so vexed because it is about race, but it is also about money. Its consequences have led to fractured regions. The sorted-out city, as Mindy Thompson Fullilove explains in *Urban Alchemy*, is dysfunctional because it is divided by race and class.

The suburbs involved a constellation of government and market forces making white homogeneity and good property values coextensive. In real estate, beginning in 1909, official policy held that integration was to be avoided. In fact, realtors thought it would be professionally unethical to promote open housing, given the widespread, racist belief that black people hurt property values (Wiese 2004). This attitude against open housing entered federal policy in the 1930s, through the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). As Andrew Wiese notes, the federal government was “deeply supportive of racism in the housing market” (Wiese 2004: 100). It upheld racially restrictive deed covenants and favored racially segregated neighborhoods with special advantages. What’s more, local government worked strategically to keep black people from moving into suburban spaces. Federal programs deepened the divide in resources available to white people as opposed to people of color. The National Housing Acts of 1934 and 1937 are instances of legislation that contributed to segregation. They facilitated home purchasing by insulating private lenders against defaults. However, the FHA policy functioned according to a racist model of the sorted-out city. Its underwriting manual warned that “property values deteriorate when Negroes move into predominantly white neighborhoods” and restricted loans from being

granted in areas “of cities considered risky for economic *or* racial reasons.” The FHA program wouldn’t support mortgages for African Americans in white neighborhoods (Panish 1997: 4–5).

Stable integration in suburbs is as fragile as it is uncommon. Historian, lawyer, and Cleveland housing activist Kermit Lind surveys the deep roots and persistent causes of this vulnerability. Lind notes that white flight was built around “marketing tactics pandering to racial fear and prejudice” (Lind 1982: 608). These tactics included: racial steering,¹⁷ blockbusting, and panic selling. Integrated neighborhoods “were not regarded as a legitimate part of the system; they were assumed to be in a state of pathological transition” (Lind 1982: 608). Additionally, Lind notes a lack of faith in integrated housing among white people; white home-buyers “are generally unfamiliar with interracial neighborhoods and are under the impression that no neighborhood will remain permanently interracial” (Lind 1982: 609). This lack of faith in the stability of integrated neighborhoods is a significant factor in their lack of stability. In a real estate market built around how the perception of neighborhoods shapes the reality of who lives in them and how much they’re worth, perceptions can be self-fulfilling.

Yet the perception of neighborhood stability is highly ideological. It involves factions disputing the nature of social reality. Contesting business practices that prey on fear of the other are a big part of this. Lind notes: “[I]t is generally true that interracial communities consider attitudes and practices of real estate business to be the most

¹⁷ Sugrue describes steering as the most important tactic used by the real estate industry to preserve racially homogenous neighborhoods after 1968: “The practice of directing white homebuyers to all-white communities and black homebuyers to predominantly black or racially transitional neighborhoods...Audit studies of housing discrimination conducted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and by local housing and nonprofit agencies consistently show the persistence of discriminatory treatment of black home seekers and renters” (Sugrue 2008: 538).

significant factors threatening resegregation” (Lind 1982: 635). Businesses stand to gain money by promulgating the narrative that integrated living can’t be sustained. Indeed, it has long been industry policy to inhibit open housing.

Open housing makes housing available to anyone qualified to pay for it. The practice bars racially exclusionary selling practices. Yet integrated housing sales have been resisted for a variety of reasons in Cleveland. According to local housing activists, fear of interracial neighborhoods range from the financially self-interested to the outright racist. White people fear that housing values will go down if their neighborhood integrates. The real estate industry tends to give reason to support this fear. Yet prejudicial fear is not far away. According to documents from local activists, other reasons white people in the Cleveland area have given regarding the need to resist integration include: stereotypes of black people as criminal and unintelligent; stereotypes that black people don’t maintain value and won’t be able to pay their mortgage; fear that neighborhood schools will decline if integrated; and fear of intermarriage (Freedheim and Bloom 1968).

Jazz, Utopia and the Suburbs

Robert Fishman describes the suburb as a “bourgeois utopia.” Here a private class-culture imprints its private ideals on the landscape, near nature and far from city venality. For Fishman, the suburb is importantly “defined by what it excludes: all industry, most commerce except for enterprises that specifically serve a residential area, and all lower-class residents (except for servants). These social and economic characteristics are all expressed in design through a suburban tradition of both residential

and landscape architecture” (Fishman 1987: 23). Beginning near the end of the eighteenth century in England, the appeal of suburbia has been its distance from high-density living and contact with diverse urban populations. Suburbs “catered to an Arcadian fantasy in which the nuclear family would be plucked from the social fabric of the city and placed in purifying contact with nature” (Mckenzie 1994: 81). The suburb offered the middle-class family a single-family home with an expansive green lawn and assured independence and privacy.

Jazz has its own utopian dimensions. Ethnomusicologist Paul Austerlitz makes a case for jazz consciousness as a “utopian space, but a real utopian space, a lived mode of expansiveness that enacts a step in awareness, moving from ambivalence to multivalence, from doubleness to all-ness” (Austerlitz 2005: 190). For Austerlitz, this utopian realm exists against the dominant grain of American society. It is “a virtual space of inclusiveness created out of necessity by musicians contending with an exclusionist society” (Austerlitz 2005: 19). Yet against critics who “might laud jazz’s aesthetic ‘integration’ as an epitome of ‘American democracy,’” Austerlitz argues “that the inclusiveness of jazz is *atypical* of dominant trends in the United States, that it developed as a *counterforce* to racial polarization” (Austerlitz 2005: 20). The ideal of jazz consciousness is inherently at odds with the vision of homogenous, private suburbia. Yet jazz in the suburbs is not new.

David Ake points to Pat Metheny’s album *American Garage* as evidencing a “consequential shift in jazz’s place in the United States” (Ake 2010: 98). Unlike the standard account of jazz moving between cities or the occasional emergence of a rurally inflected jazz aesthetic, Metheny marks a defining moment for placing jazz in the

suburbs. Several artists followed Metheny's *American Garage* in forming a genre of suburban jazz. For Ake, this movement, beginning in 1980, reflects "a decidedly white flight from the city" (Ake 2010: 98). While Ake's tracing of an aesthetic shift in the jazz discography is compelling, suburbanites have also long sought out black urban clubs as a destination.¹⁸

Mobility facilitated by car and train shaped the context of interracial integration. For example, Cleveland's second downtown, a prime place for jazz in the 1950s, involved many suburban attendees. Celebrated white jazz musicians Ernie Krivda and Val Kent both grew up in the suburb of Garfield Heights and cut their teeth as youngsters by traveling to the urban jazz scene. Part of this importance involves the relationship between the suburban and the urban as linked by car and train. In this sense, Cleveland's racialized spaces were never pure; they always included interlopers. The intermixing in these spaces echoes the early integrated residential history of black people in Cleveland.

Space Makes Race in Cleveland: From Integration to Segregation

In the middle of the nineteenth century, black people were integrated into Cleveland with relative ease (Davis 1985). However, they encountered serious spatial containment over time. Prior to the First World War, black people residing in Cleveland were generally those who were born there. From 1915, blacks who migrated to Cleveland from the South were relatives of former slaves or former slaves themselves. When they arrived, they faced limited educational access and the expectation of subservience.

Between 1910 and 1920, the number of black people living in Cleveland increased by

¹⁸ We can consider the literature on "interzones" (Mumford 1997) and "the problem of white hipness" (Monson 1995). Or, we might consider individual commuters, such as Miki Dora at the Barrelhouse nightclub in Watts (Lipsitz 2010: xiii).

308 percent. As the number of black migrants increased, the places where they could live decreased. In fact, the census data points to an increase in areas with no black residents from seventeen to thirty-eight (Kusmer 1976: 71).

In the 1920s, thanks to a labor scarcity in the North due to the constraints on immigration from Europe mandated by the Johnson-Reed Act and other immigration policies, combined with the devastation wrought by the boll weevil in the South and that region's intense and overt racial hostility, the black population of Cleveland grew by 3 percent. A great majority of these black people moved into the central area, however, a few found homes in Collinwood, Mount Pleasant, and Glenville along with the suburbs of West Park and Maple Heights. However, many residential districts were off-limits to blacks. Charles W. Chesnutt explains the centralization of the black community:

In these districts they can purchase or rent or occupy property without objection and many of them own their own homes. Other residential districts are resistant to their advent, sometimes by intimidation or violence, but there are quite a few scattered in the district between Superior and the lake in the vicinity of East 105th Street. The whole Heights development is practically closed to them, though few families not obviously Negroid, have secured a foothold. It is about as difficult for a Negro to buy property on the Heights... as it is for the traditional camel to pass through the traditional needle. This exclusiveness is maintained by care in sales, and by restrictive clauses in deed... (Chesnutt in Stokes-Hammond 2011: 48)

Although black people did challenge restrictions to living outside of densely populated black areas, the pattern of black ghettoization and white suburban exclusivity was firmly established.

While some Jewish and Catholic families moved into Shaker Heights, there were "absolute barriers" to black people. Haywood, a Van Sweringen historian, writes that "when two black families purchased homes in Shaker Heights, the Van Sweringen Company policy in 1925 was changed to require that either the company or 'neighboring

property homeowners approve covenants' for any homes resold in Shaker Heights as of that year. The original deeds did not address re-sales of property, so they were changed" (Haywood in Stokes Hammond 2011: 67–68). When a black physician purchased a home in Shaker Heights in 1925, white residents threw rocks, fired a gun into his home and burned down his garage. Additionally, four hundred residents met at the high school, leading to the formation of a committee "concerned only with an attempt to prevent so far as is possible, the future purchase and occupancy of property in Shaker Heights by persons whom a majority in the neighborhood deem undesirable neighbors" (Stokes-Hammond 2004: 72). Subsequently, the Van Sweringen company created a rule stating that "the lots are not to be sold or occupied without the written consent of the Van Sweringen Company, or if that Company refuses its consent, without the consent of a majority of the owners of certain adjoining and facing lots in the immediate neighborhood which are also so restricted" (Stokes-Hammond 2004: 72). This dovetailed with Van Sweringen's "compatible neighbor" policy—comprehended as white and Protestant. The only space that Shaker Heights residents allowed black people to occupy was that of a servant. In this sense, Shaker was integrated since the founding of Shaker Village in 1912. Like many other "all-white" suburbs, black people who were not homeowners were in the community. By 1920, 50 black people lived and worked as servants in wealthy white homes. By 1950, there were 558 black servants in the community. Intimate racial divisions were a quotidian part of Shaker life from 1920 to 1960. Black people were present in the all-white suburb all along, even as segregated home ownership was sustained by legal ordinances and realtor practices.

On a national level, the legal fight against segregation includes the 1917 *Buchanan v. Warley* fight against racial zoning ordinances, as well as *Shelley v. Kraemer*, in 1948, where the court struck down racial covenants. Likewise, Thurgood Marshall played an instrumental role in revealing the rigid segregationist policy of the Federal Housing Administration, opening it up to civic activism (Nightingale 2012: 387). Between 1940 and the 1960s, open housing activists compelled state legislatures to pass a number of open housing laws. White suburbanites also partook in this activism against restrictive housing practices by supporting open occupancy. For example, some signed covenants of open occupancy that would “welcome into their neighborhood any residents of good character, regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin” (Nightingale 2012: 387). In other neighborhoods, communities organized to fight the tactics of the real estate industry and ignore agents who sought to panic them into selling out of fear of integration and transition.

With black people moving into the area in 1955, the Ludlow effort is one key example in Shaker Heights of fighting to undercut banking and real estate practices that would re-segregate the community. The Ludlow area, named after its elementary school, was the first area in Shaker Heights to integrate. Community organizers worked in earnest in response to white fears about black people moving into the area. Resident organizers worked to dissuade whites from selling in a panic and to engage and lessen the fears of a homogenous community facing heterogeneity for the first time.

Around this same time, the Moreland area began to integrate. By the beginning of the 1960s, the Lomond and Sussex areas also became integrated. Marcoux notes that “the integrated areas had experienced two of the historical symptoms of the so-called

‘changing’ neighborhood—panic selling and the departure of the brokers with their white buyers” (Marcoux 1973: 2). Residents organized associations “to maintain integration and to prolong indefinitely that ‘brief span’” (Marcoux 1973: 2). A key part of this process was challenging myths about crime, declining property values and deteriorating housing. In Ludlow, “block groups were formed...to stay in touch with the activities on each street, and to track down rumors” (Marcoux 1973: 2).

With the success of integrated living, the real estate industry left. Although the neighborhood welcomed newcomers in an organized, public way, sales to black people increased, while sales to white people decreased. In 1965, however, the Shaker Heights Citizens Advisory Commission negotiated to bring real estate firms back to Shaker Heights. Consequently, community members faced a significantly lower financial burden and took on a PR campaign in national publications. Additionally, Suburban Citizens for Open Housing was established, aiming to open other suburbs to black home-buyers, providing black residents more freedom of choice.

What had started out as citizen activism turned into community policy. The Shaker Heights housing office became a part of Shaker Heights city government, with the goal of maintaining racial stabilization by “actively attempting to attract whites to these areas” (Marcoux 1973: 1). Marcoux notes: “Blacks and whites are living side by side in peace, property values increase consistently along with the rest of Shaker, and the schools continue to maintain their high standards” (Marcoux 1973: 3). Additionally, the housing office helps black families find housing in other parts of the city. Marcoux describes the integrated Shaker community as having strong schools, excellent services, public

transportation and green spaces. It has “everything to offer families who want comfortable suburban living” (Marcoux 1973: 1).

Ella Fitzgerald at Severance Hall

On April 23, 1966, the Ludlow Community Association hosted a benefit concert featuring Ella Fitzgerald. Severance Hall, the elegant concert hall of the Cleveland Orchestra, provided a setting for the popular performer. The concert was an opportunity for the audience to support the ideals of Ludlow, an integrated neighborhood straddling Cleveland and Shaker Heights. After the concert, five hundred dress circle and box ticket-holders adjourned to a champagne supper at Western Reserve University. Beginning at 11:00 p.m., they ate ham, turkey, fried chicken, salads and relishes. Ella Fitzgerald appeared at 11:30 to converse and sign autographs. Guests stayed until 1:00 a.m. (The Western Reserve Historical Society 1988).

The concert shares much in common with narratives of interracial friendship that reverberate with disingenuousness.¹⁹ Interracial performances of goodwill are everywhere in popular culture, but nowhere is there racial equality. Social tensions tend to be resolved through symbolic reconciliation, while the mainspring of unequal social relations goes ignored. However, on further inspection, the concert is part of the social work of community organizers to create a counternarrative of sustainable integrated living opposed to dominant cultural ideas and business practices that destabilize

¹⁹ For an argument critiquing popular representations of friendship that obscure structural power through interpersonal connection, see DeMott (1995). DeMott argues that popular narratives of interracial friendship render inexpressible continuities of structural racial inequality. Also, see Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2014); Barbara Trepagnier (2006).

integrated living. The 1966 Ella Fitzgerald concert was part of a systematic effort to maintain a fragile integrated community against powerful trends toward re-segregation.

Initially mobilized by the 1956 bombing of the home of a black lawyer who moved into the Ludlow area of Shaker Heights, the Ludlow Community Association was formed to strike a racial balance in the neighborhood. One half of the Ludlow community is in Shaker Heights and the other half is in the city of Cleveland. All of the children in the neighborhood went to school in the Shaker Heights public schools. The neighborhood straddled the urban and the suburban, reconfiguring markers of community that had been taken for granted. The 1966 annual report billed it as “Today’s Answer to Tomorrow’s Community” (Annual Report 1966).

The official stated purpose of the Ludlow Community Association, or LCA, was to “create a community open to all races and religions with common goals of maintaining quality and stability, preserving high standards and protecting the general welfare of the entire community” (Annual Report 1966). Since its first years, the LCA held small meetings in the homes of white as well as black residents in order to discuss issues facing the neighborhood. Many white families moved out of Ludlow in the 1950s as black people began to purchase homes there. The LCA worked to attract white home-buyers to the area in order to create an integrated balance. By the 1960s, a committee was created to challenge real-estate blockbusting tactics. Additionally, the association received grant money from the Cleveland Foundation in order to compensate its paid housing workers. Moreover, the Ludlow Company was developed to offer financing to home buyers.

In the following years, white families began purchasing homes in the area

again and panic selling had diminished, resulting in the achievement of a racial balance in the neighborhood. By 1969, the Ludlow community was 43 percent white and 57 percent black. The year 1966 was a particularly successful one for the Ludlow Community Association: there were twenty-five housing sales that year. Within the twenty-five sales, eighteen white families sold their homes to black families, five black families sold to other black families, and two white families sold to black families. Additionally, two white families made offers on homes owned by black people, but were turned down because the money being offered was not seen as appropriately high. These numbers reflect an increase in the number of white home-buyers from the previous year (The Western Reserve Historical Society 1988).

Ella at Severance Hall celebrated the work of the ten-year-old community effort to establish and sustain integration, and raised funds to keep the organization going. According to the annual report, the major reason for success in 1966 was the momentum of years of work: “Very often prospective buyers have followed Ludlow’s progress for several years through our open houses, fund-raising activities, newspaper articles, etc. People who are interested in integration already know what and where Ludlow is” (Annual Report 1966). Additionally, the community’s success was connected to the larger political landscape. The 1966 annual report states: “The momentum of the whole civil rights movement has had a positive effect on Ludlow buyers this past year. More and more white families no longer feel comfortable in their all or principally white neighborhoods” (Annual Report 1966). One result of the civil rights movement, then, was increasing white discomfort with homogenous white suburban space.

Finally, employees and volunteers did particularly strong work over the course of

the year. Two part-time housing coordinators, rather than one, amplified the accomplishments of the organization. Additionally, knowledgeable residents participated extensively in the housing program, providing advice about remodeling, legal issues and financing. Recommendations from the annual report include hiring an additional employee from May through September. Secondly, the committee recommends “out-of-town and magazine advertising.” The committee recommends holding another open house. These events serve to build good public relations and attract new residents. Ultimately, the housing committee recommends that housing coordinators and volunteers “cooperate closely with Suburban Citizens for Open Housing in helping negroes who contact Ludlow find suitable housing in the greater Cleveland area” (Annual Report 1966). While the organization often found itself in the position of turning away black home-buyers in order to attain racial balance within the community, it was putting at least some effort into facilitating the process of finding a decent place to live for black people who were not otherwise able to move into Ludlow.

The year 1966 was also when the Ludlow Community Association hosted Ella Fitzgerald for the fundraiser at Severance Hall. The Ludlow Community Association sold tickets to Ludlow residents and, while they were doing so, collected queries from them about the work of the association. They deliberately offered a wide range of prices to make the concert affordable to everyone in the mixed-income neighborhood. Seats in the front section of the main floor cost \$15, while most balcony seats cost \$6—with the last four rows of the balcony pegged at \$4. These tickets were primarily obtainable by Ludlow residents. The program for the Fitzgerald concert states that revenue from the event would fund the organization’s activities for the year. Three agenda points for the

year included “Continuing Ludlow as an integrated community through its nationally known housing program; Interpreting to the broader community the importance and the progress of integrated living; and Working within the broader community to establish the principle of open occupancy” (The Western Reserve Historical Society: 1988).

Three LCA co-chairmen and sixty-five ticket sellers put in hours of volunteer work to sell almost two thousand tickets to the standing-room-only concert. Three days after the tickets went on sale in January, all box seats for the event sold out. The appeal of the concert derived from a mixture of support for the ideals of the community, interest in Ella Fitzgerald and the quality of Severance Hall, a prestigious venue with “no rubber walls” (French 1966). The event was held on April 23, 1966, a Saturday, at 8:30 p.m.

Prior to the concert, an article published in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* entitled “Races Harmonize to Ella’s Song” states that the concert will be noteworthy because the harmony “she helps make will be as much racial as musical.” The Severance Hall concert was a new source of funding for the Ludlow Community Association, a group that had previously subsisted on foundation grants. The neighborhood of six hundred homes in Ludlow “straddling Cleveland and Shaker Heights, which also made interracial togetherness a reality, now has to stand or fall-on its residents own feet.” According to Miss Helen Simpsons, one of the three co-chairs for the concert, “We’ve still got problems and a lot of work to do. But we’re past the pioneer stage and foundation money isn’t readily available—so we have to raise the cash ourselves” (The Western Reserve Historical Society 1988).

Fitzgerald’s band for the Severance concert was the Jimmy Jones Trio, featuring Jimmy Jones on piano, Joe Comfort on bass and Stan Levy on drums. The repertoire

included a range of material, such as ballads, blues, show tunes and popular music: “Misty,” “S’Wonderful,” “Do Nothing till You Hear from Me,” “Let’s Do It,” “Tiskett-a-Tasket,” “How High the Moon,” “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes,” “Somewhere There’s Music,” “Love for Sale,” and “St. Louis Blues.” Before intermission, Fitzgerald asked if she was singing the right songs. After intermission, the Jones Trio performed two tunes, then Fitzgerald returned to the stage, singing “The Shadow of Your Smile.” The second set also featured Fitzgerald singing “Hello Dolly” with an imitation of Louis Armstrong. She sang “Hard Day’s Night,” a tune written and popularized by the Beatles. She also expressed contrition for not being able to perform more contemporary top hits, pointing to the lack of a guitar in the band. However, Fitzgerald did the popular dance “the Jerk.” For an encore, Fitzgerald sang “These Boots Are Made for Walkin’,” and the fashionably attired audience clapped along to the rhythm, a kind of performer-audience interaction not often found at Severance Hall. Indeed, the audience was entranced by Fitzgerald from the beginning of her first set, responding enthusiastically throughout the evening’s performance. For one journalist, Fitzgerald “quickly established rapport, the artist and her audience built crescendo after crescendo of achievement and appreciation which ended in a standing ovation for the artist.”

The program for the event lists the unique accomplishments of the Ludlow community. A story originally in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported that Ludlow residents took matters into their own hands to challenge the segregated norm. Ludlow “did not wait for public officials or professional advisors or public assistance programs to hear its whimpers and come to its aid. It rolled up its sleeves and went to work with the energy of many hands and the wisdom of many minds and today it is the model

community that is the envy of places that waited too long to act and then could only cry out in despair.” Similarly, sociology professor Marvin Sussman of Western Reserve University highlighted Ludlow’s intentional community-organizing tactics: “As far as I know, this is the only comparable area in America which has reached racial stabilization through the voluntary efforts of members of the community.” The *Ohio Bell Magazine* is quoted complimenting the Ludlow Community for “making a unique contribution to interracial living in Midwest America.” Also in the concert program, the *Wall Street Journal* questions: “Can whites be convinced that having Negro neighbors is not only inevitable but desirable? Affirmative answers are being demonstrated in suburban Shaker Heights’ Ludlow School district” (Severance Hall Program 1966).

Other program notes champion Ludlow as a pioneer community that has defied expectations. Ernest J. Cooper, the executive director of the Cleveland Urban League, endorses Ludlow, asserting that it “can act as an example and pattern for other Cleveland suburbs to follow its lead in race relations.” The program notes make clear how unanticipated Ludlow’s success was: “Ludlow explodes and destroys all the traditional myths concerning integrated housing...” The program contained an endorsement from Julian Krawcheck of the *Cleveland Press*, stating that for perhaps “the first time in U.S. history, a Cleveland Community has stemmed a trend toward Negro saturation and attained a racial balance long held to be almost impossible.” Indeed, the successful actions of the Ludlow residents flew in the face of professional opinion. For housing activist Stuart Wallace, “Ludlow is America’s most outstanding example of a reversal of neighborhood racial trends. Professionals would have said it was impossible to reverse

such a pattern but the non-professionals in Ludlow have proved them wrong” (Severance Hall Program 1966).

According to attendees and reviewers, the sold-out Severance Hall concert was a huge success. Writing in the Ludlow Community Association’s *Ludlow: Notes, News, & Neighbors*, Bill Percy states that Fitzgerald “sang, clowned, joked and danced her way anew into our hearts” (The Western Reserve Historical Society 1988). Famed Cleveland society reporter Winsor French was similarly effusive about the concert in his column, writing, “Magic is the Word for Ella... I have been to many a jazz concert in my day, but none to equal the incredible recital Ella Fitzgerald gave in Severance Hall last Saturday night to benefit the Ludlow Community Assn. To begin with, there quite literally wasn’t an empty seat in the house. The patrons were standing in the aisles and they would have been hanging from the rafters like bats had there been any rafters to hang from” (French 1966). French states that the audience “loved her” in a way that might more accurately be described as worship: “Only once have I been in such an audience, this is Paris immediately after the war when I went with the late Rodney Sutton to hear Piaf, who generated the same sort of hushed awe” (French 1966). French’s review continues in the same rapturous tone, describing his inability to capture Fitzgerald’s “magic,” but noting that she could “charm the birds from the trees.” Likewise, he states that she sustains pitch even while performing some “of the most fantastic vocal gymnastics imaginable.” At the end of the evening, Fitzgerald was giving a standing ovation and a corsage. For French, “She should have been given an entire greenhouse. There is no one like her” (French 1966).

The Ella Fitzgerald concert illustrates the power of that kind of musical event.

Christopher Small has stated: “In the concert hall, as at any other kind of musical event, there is an underlying kinship between the members of the audience” (Small 1998: 41). Cleveland writers shared this stream of thought. Writing in a Cleveland paper after the event, Kathleen O’Brien titled an article: “In Dollars and Integration: Ella Fitzgerald’s Concert at Severance Hall Is a Huge Success.” For O’Brien, the concert “was not only a success in dollars and cents, but also a success in that the audience was fully integrated from balcony to box. This is significant because of the community itself and the type of life residents have strived for” (O’Brien 1966). In her view, the concert evidenced a realization of Ludlow’s integrated vision within the microcosm of the concert hall.

After the Ludlow concert, J. F. Saunder wrote in the *Plain Dealer* that Ella Fitzgerald’s concert “gave proof” to a point made by then-mayor Ralph S. Locher about the eradication of intolerance: Locher, a Democrat, stated that “In conjunction with programs of physical renewal we must be concerned first with human values, human renewal and the elimination of prejudice and bigotry.” For Locher, genuine energy must be exerted by an individual in order to “make himself aware of the hopes and desires of his fellow citizens.” Similarly, Locher contends that a genuine knowledge of the other inevitably leads to the fading away of conflict: “Whenever people come to really know each other, the hatreds, the antagonisms and the tensions melt away.” In Saunder’s view, members of the audience at the Fitzgerald event “have gotten to know each other and out of their knowledge has grown respect for each other as the individuals they are.” Locher calls for manifesting the Ludlow experiment in other neighborhoods of Greater Cleveland, particularly in the West Side and western suburbs: “West Siders shuddering at the thought of having a Negro family in their midst are reminded that white Ludlow

residents were having similar shudders a few years ago, but on the recent evening they went with their Negro neighbors to a benefit concert given to protect the satisfying and contented way of life they have found together “ (The Western Reserve Historical Society 1988).

By foregrounding the language of “getting to know each other,” the article renders opaque the barriers to proximity that are a prerequisite to community. Missing from the statements by Saunder and Locher are mention of the federal policies and real estate practices that facilitated segregated housing. Instead, the story revolves entirely around the actions of black and white people who were open-minded. While interpersonal warmth and familiarity were certainly an important part of the Ludlow Community Association, solely focusing on the interpersonal dimension obscures the material dimension of the racial politics the community was taking on. The analysis that Saunder presents obscures the way in which segregation served as a vehicle for social as well as economic mobility. For one, living in a neighborhood with black people threatened a stability associated with whiteness. Andrew Wiese notes that it was “to lose hard-won gains, to be associated with ‘blackness,’ and potentially to be trapped at the bottom rung of the American social ladder” (Wiese 2004: 99). Moreover, Wiese asserts that white racism played a major role in resisting the process of African American suburbanization, and it was a combination of “violent fantasies about the social consequences of racial integration—especially images of rape and miscegenation” and “economic fear” that “led millions of whites to view black neighbors as something like Visigoths at the gates of Rome” (Wiese 2004: 98).

In-Concert with Ludlow: Artistic Collaboration and Community Stability

Forty-two years later, another concert was held in Ludlow that responded to the very fears about downward mobility and violence that had always haunted white flight. However, discourse surrounding the 2008 concert did not always emphasize language pertaining to race. Instead, the language of community stability and suppressing violence often substituted for racial language regarding the event, with the racial meanings of the concert often hinted at, rather than straightforwardly articulated. The 2008 concert was, nevertheless, a concert for maintaining the viability of an integrated suburb and resisting re-segregation—even if the centrality of race was cloaked behind a decorously color-blind vocabulary.

Early in the evening on the last day of 2007, New Year's Eve, a fifty-two-year-old white lawyer named Kevin McDermott was walking through his neighborhood in the Ludlow community when a group of young African American men severely beat him, sending him to the hospital. The police chief in Shaker Heights stated that the beatings were random and were not connected to a gang. In the weeks after the attack, a group of neighbors met at Ludlow School to express grief and to organize a response. They held walks through the community to support each other and McDermott, the man who was attacked. One result of these meetings was the organization of a community concert, *In-Concert with Ludlow: Celebrating the Spirit of Neighborhood Through Music & Dance*. The concert emerged as a collaboration between the Shaker Heights Arts Council, the Ludlow Community Association and Verlezza, a dance company based in Shaker. At the time, the head of the Ludlow Community Association was Luiz Coelho, a music teacher in Shaker schools. The *In-Concert with Ludlow* event offered the community artistic

rapprochement after a vicious act of violence. For the event, they were able to use the Shaker Heights auditorium. Although the concert occurred on the day of a terrible snowstorm, more than eight hundred people showed up. The event raised more than \$8,000, which were used to provide need-based scholarships for children in the Ludlow area for summer internships and arts experiences. I interviewed attendees, organizers and performers involved with the event and encountered differing narratives. My interviewees began with different starting points in locating racial meaning. Some emphasized race throughout their recounting of the attack and the concert. Others emphasized random violence as a community concern, without mentioning the race of the assailants or the victim. These different discourses point to the fact that Ludlow residents were not just countering a violent act and providing healing for the community; they were also countering violent fears of integrated living that have been a central part of the suburban imagination—as well as an awareness of how public perception of a neighborhood’s stability has a very real impact on the stability of that neighborhood.

After the violence against Kevin McDermott, the *New York Times* suggested that the successes of the historic integrated neighborhood had been called into question. The attack “has raised concerns about safety, race and integration that many people here thought were laid to rest long ago” in “one of the first places in suburban America where blacks and whites came together to live as neighbors.” People outside of Shaker regard it as an unsafe suburb and consider homes distant from the urban core to be safer. These voices “believe that Shaker Heights will eventually be overwhelmed by Cleveland residents, many of them African-Americans, trying to escape the city’s high crime rate and struggling schools.” The segregation of the city has impoverished areas that people

are trying to escape. In short, the article points to many who believe that white flight would occur and that Shaker would not remain an integrated community. The *New York Times* notes that for many outsiders, the attack on Kevin McDermott “is seen as comeuppance for a community that seemed smug about its wealth, security and racial diversity” (Maag 2008).

For some commentators outside the community, Shaker Heights was regarded as deluded about the realities of urban violence. For example, one commentator came close to suggesting that black people are innately criminals and that class privilege was the only thing preventing Ludlow residents from seeing this. On a *Cleveland Plain Dealer* blog, a reader posted a message questioning the integrationist idealism incubated within a class-privileged community. In the face of an immediate experience of violence, the reader suggests that the ideals of the socially advantaged dwellers of Shaker Heights would crumble: “I wonder how much ‘tolerance’ the ‘progressive,’ snooty, pseudo-intellectual limousine liberal socialists of Shaker Heights will show now that the thugs are in their neighborhood too” (Maag 2008). For this commentator, the class advantages of Shaker Heights residents had sheltered them from the harshness of urban violence. Diversity was regarded as a function of class privilege.

On the *Plain Dealer* website, someone suggested that the east-side of Cleveland should have a fence constructed around it (Mirzoeff 2009). Others suggested that white people should move out. *Cleveland Plain Dealer* columnist Dick Feagler wrote an opinion column that expressed his fears about living in close proximity to Cleveland. He regards white flight as an inevitable as well as a sensible result of the attack: “So move. But do it like we all have—like the whole three-county area has—don’t call it racism.

Call it reality.” He structured his column around the “white person’s dilemma” of distinguishing between racism and reality. For Feagler, white people with money should not make the distinction, they should move away. He notes that white movement away from black people has been “a reality in my town for decades. It may have begun as racism. But it soon became reality.” Feagler even points to Ludlow in the 1960s, when it was celebrated as a model of integration: “All the way back then, we tried to tease apart the strands of racism and realism” (Feagler 2008). It’s worth pointing out that the assumed “we” and its boundary of belonging presumes whiteness and the organized abandonment of urban areas. Feagler defines reality as being intractably enclosed by racist policies of the past.²⁰

This column, in particular, raised the ire of people living in the Ludlow community. One resident celebrated Shaker for its deliberate effort to “have every economic class, which I think is just revolutionary...It has maintained that. It’s a good and bad thing. It has its problems and its wonderful benefits.” Someone involved with the concert pointed out that “Shaker has a mixed reputation of being both ritzy and integrated.” One Shaker resident, involved with the community response, suggested that the concert was “a comeback” to Dick Feagler’s pessimism about Shaker: “I remember that was part of our discussions. Foey on you Dick Feagler, we’re going to show you.” In the face of doubters, the concert made a strong statement about the resilience of the community.

Brian Walker, one of the first African Americans to attend Ludlow school, stated that the integrated community is resented by other Cleveland residents because it

²⁰ Here, we might also note David Graeber’s point that “reality” isn’t generally about “natural, material facts; neither is it really some supposed ugly truth about human nature. Normally it’s a recognition of the effects of the systematic threat of violence” (Graeber 2010: 45).

challenges pessimistic conclusions about the inevitability of racial segregation in housing: “People in the Cleveland area resent us because we’re a repudiation of everything they believe...we’re proof that white people and black people can live together.” Tom Chelimsky, co-president of the Ludlow Community Association at the time, wrote: “You can’t run forever...we’re not naïve. We’re tough, and we’re going to stand together.” Eighty-year-old Christine Branche, a woman who moved into Ludlow in 1956, said: “I’ll move from this house into an urn” (Maag 2008).

Sustaining the reputation of the neighborhood was part of the response to the attack that began immediately after the incident. Luiz Coelho, who was then the head of the Ludlow Community Association and who would become the music director of the concert, told me:

We came together as a community because of the tragedy that happened. These teenagers beat up a neighbor. We came together to support him and his family. We held a lot of walks first, helping each other. Every weekend we did a walk in the neighborhood together... We got a lot of interest in the media about what had happened. [The walks were to] support the neighborhood and show that nothing would break us... Sometimes, when tragedy happens, they try to...say that’s not a stable neighborhood. We are a stable neighborhood.

Coelho’s remarks made clear that the concert was about the attack and healing of the community. It was also about engaging with the politics of perception: “They try to...say that’s not a stable neighborhood. We are a stable neighborhood,” insisted Marcia Romano, then the head of the Shaker Heights Arts Council, who stated that concert organizers were concerned about the reputation of the neighborhood, noting: “People said...why don’t you move? Why are you staying here?”

The whole point of this was we are not going to be moved. We believe in this. We are not leaving...because somebody wants to come in here and scare us out. It was a defiance...It was also healing. I think the terminology we used was “healing the community and showing our support.”

Romano regarded the major goal of the concert as putting such fear and skepticism to rest: “The idea was to have the community stand up and say: we don’t want this type of thing to happen here. Make sure that we have one common voice. Say that’s enough, we don’t want this.” Indeed, Romano suggests that the concert entailed celebrating a rich history:

There’s nothing anyone can do in a situation like that...Art does play a role in expressing what we were trying to say: this is a community and we are all going to stand here solidly. Again, Ludlow’s history was so important in this...Ludlow stands for so much and what it has meant to Shaker, which was a pretty exclusive society before Ludlow got a grip on things. It has changed Shaker. It really deserves the kind of reputation it has for being at the forefront of lots of things.

Similarly, for Luiz Coelho, the concert sent a clear message about neighborhood strength:

We felt we needed to show the support to everybody. The mayor came and council people came from both Shaker and Cleveland to show that it is a very important neighborhood and that it needs to stay stable.

A recurrent theme from respondents was that Shaker Heights in general, and Ludlow in particular, are places that respond collectively and gracefully to problems. For

Marcia Romano:

Instead of looking at something that could be a negative, we asked how we could solve this and find what to do about it...that kind of thing can happen anywhere, it just happened to have happened here.

Gwendolyn Chapman, Ludlow Community Association president and longtime resident of the community, situated the concert within a long lineage of community response. For Chapman, “Any time that there was a problem in the neighborhood...the problem really brought people together.” She notes that “when the community first became integrated...there were a lot of problems.” She then pointed to the Ludlow welcoming committee as one long-held Ludlow strategy for bringing people together. This

committee did the door-to-door, neighbor-to-neighbor work of disarming fear and building community stability through connection.

County commissioner Peter Lawson Jones gave the opening remarks at *In-Concert with Ludlow* and rhetorically linked the past to the present. He began with the story of the African American Pegg family moving into Shaker Heights in the 1950s and having their home bombed. The community of Ludlow “quickly and decisively responded...They determined to say no to the blockbusting tactics of that time.” Jones then suggested that Ludlow exhibited the traits and attributes of the “beloved Community.” Jones quotes Martin Luther King in defining the “beloved community”:

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy. The true neighbor will risk his position, his prestige and even his life for the welfare of others. In dangerous values and hazardous pathways, he will lift some bruised and beaten brother to a higher and more noble life.

Jones then stated: “Certainly, in 1957, when the Ludlow Community responded and established the Ludlow Community Association, it did just that. It exhibited just those kinds of qualities.” He then invokes a continuity by linking the community’s reaction to the McDermott attack to the history of responses to violence:

Fifty years or so later, with the brutal and violent and unprovoked assault on our friend Kevin McDermott, Ludlow again responded courageously, saying: We will not be frightened. We will not be scared. We will remain together as a community.

Jones then invoked the unity of the diverse crowd in standing behind the Ludlow Community and Kevin McDermott:

Today, as we gather together in this place, black and white, male and female, Jew and gentile and Muslim—whether we are from Mercer or Onaway or Lomond, or Sussex or Boulevard or Fernway—we are all today supporters and friends of the Ludlow Community and of Kevin McDermott.

He then introduced Kevin McDermott: “We are indeed, so fortunate to have with us...still standing tall and straight, Kevin McDermott.” Jones then linked the 2008 concert to the Ella Fitzgerald concert from 1966. He closed by stating: “You’ll be treated to music, poetry, theater and dance as we celebrate and honor Ludlow Community Association, its storied history, and again, our friend Kevin McDermott.”

The concert included a range of performers, with a variety of performances from the Shaker public school students and the Verlezza dance company. The first performance of the evening was Aaron Copland’s “Fanfare for the Common Man,” followed by a rendition of “Hoedown” from the ballet *Rodeo* by Shaker Heights High School musicians. Other aspects of the concert included “Prayer for Peace” by John Williams, performed by a high school string quartet, along with a choral rendition of John Lennon’s “Imagine” and several modern dances performed by the Verlezza dance company. The Ella Baker quote “Give light and people will find the way” was performed as a folk song (Ludlow Community Association 2008).

Poet Kelly Harris delivered a searching poem about the ambivalences and confusions emanating from the results of the civil rights movement. She speaks to the difficulty of knowing what we have inherited and where we are going, asserting that she confuses “the finish with the start” and is “unsure that we have overcome at all.” Additionally she references and remixes Martin Luther King’s famous line “I may not get there with you,” stating that she isn’t sure where “there” is anymore.

A jazz quartet from Shaker Heights High School performed “Beauty and the Beast” by Wayne Shorter and accompanied dancers from the Verlezza dance company with a version of “My Funny Valentine.” William Clarence Marshall and Marcia Berg

performed “Summertime” as well as “Bess, You Is My Woman now” from *Porgy and Bess*. The latter performance struck a particular chord with one of my respondents. The symbolism of a love story between a black man and a white woman stood as an affirmative narrative about the ideals of the Ludlow Community. Although the respondent did not seem to be aware of the original narrative from which the scene was excerpted, she found it metaphorically powerful. She stated that there was a performance “with a Caucasian woman and an African American man and it was almost like a love dance...it was so endearing...it got just a resounding applause from the audience...it was like, ‘We will stand for that story.’ It was like a way of underscoring the narrative that ‘That’s who we are.’ I just thought that was such a powerful, defining moment for who we are.” The predominant meaning of the performance for this respondent was in its symbolic representation of interracial love, which she read onto Ludlow locality. A musician involved in the performance told me: “It’s always been Shaker’s thing...we strive to be integrated” (Ludlow Community Association 2008).

Still, from speaking with informants, the major emphasis was not what the content of the concert meant, but what the staging of the concert did. The concert was a “response” to an act of violence in the community and to critics of the community. In the realm of housing, where people’s perceptions of the stability of a community profoundly shape whether or not the community is stable, reputation matters. More than anything else, the concert performed stability. There were differing takes on whether race was a meaningful variable in the violence against Kevin McDermott and differing interpretations of the racial content within the performance itself, but the unifying constant was that the community was strong and stable. The primary import of the

concert was saying something through the act of joining together to say something. The message of the concert was one of standing together as a community.

Conclusion: Mobilizing Music for Stability

The Ludlow concerts articulated the integration ideals of the residential community they happened in. However, this cultural work has its limits. Concert reviewers focused on the production of interpersonal harmony without attending closely to the structural and material dimensions of race in Ludlow. The exuberance of music reviewers focusing on interracial harmony in the concert hall helped create a counternarrative to real estate orthodoxy that integrated neighborhoods don't work. Still, the invisible structuring role of government and real estate interests in shaping segregated communities was beyond their scope. *In Concert with Ludlow* was not simply about a community performing its integrated self to itself, but also a way of publicly managing perceptions about the stability of the neighborhood, an important maneuver in the world of housing, where the perception of instability can create the reality of instability.

The exclusions of suburbia's past still shape the present. Aesthetic moments of inclusivity always occur within the racialized spaces of the sorted-out city and exceptions to the sorted-out rule. What Paul Austerlitz calls the "utopian politics of jazz consciousness" (Austerlitz 2005) is important, as is the cultural discourse of equality and integration. Still, this language of possibility through difference is a beginning, not an end to challenging the systemic material forces at work that buttress segregation.

Shaker Heights has done a great deal to maintain integration against significant outside pressure (Nightingale 2012: 387). As Thomas Sugrue notes, Shaker Heights,

Ohio, “regularly reorganized school attendance boundaries to prevent racial segregation and white flight from ‘black’ sections of town” (Sugrue 2008: 446). This voluntary effort worked, and “attracted white liberals and upwardly mobile blacks. But integration required constant vigilance. Only a handful of other communities anywhere had the resources or the desire to create ‘managed’ racial integration” (Sugrue 2008: 446). Still, despite the success of Shaker Heights, the emphasis on the limitations of the community’s efforts are clear, even for those who fought for integration. One Shaker Heights open housing activist named Gerta Freidheim states: “There is no political force for [the poor] at all.” She notes the limits of civic activism in stating that anything more than “the peppering of white suburbia, if it’s going to come at all...has to come from federal leverage” (Freidheim in Sugrue 2008: 424).

The history of real estate practice, federal policy, violence and cultural practices created enduringly inscribed racial inequality on the separate and unequal geography of the United States. Sounding out integration is important, but the exception should not be mistaken for the rule. Performances of integration can take on its form while disavowing its substance. The mechanisms that enabled whites to own homes and black people to have difficulty owning homes were largely invisible—and they continue to shape the “ghetto game” of white panic-selling in the face of new black neighbors. Yet, though it has been naturalized, this segregation is not natural. Significant writers have attended to the deep influence jazz has had on American culture, going so far as to call it the “theme song” of America during the twentieth century (Collier in Peretti 1997: 4). While there may be some truth to the deep impact of jazz across the boundaries of the United States,

Ludlow shows how it can be mobilized as part of a counternarrative for resisting re-segregation and achieving a stable community in practice.

CHAPTER 2

Democratizing Opportunity to the National Metaphor of Democracy: Freedom to Substantive Equality and Jazz in a Segregated City

In 1987, the U.S. Congress approved House Resolution 57, enshrining jazz as a national metaphor which “makes evident to the world an outstanding artistic model of individual expression and democratic cooperation” (Conyers in Laver 2015:164). The resolution appeared at the end of the Reagan era; neoliberalism was disciplining labor to capital and the language of social responsibility was being reformulated to describe the private sector.²¹ In that same era, Reagan invoked the legacy of Martin Luther King in his rhetoric of freedom and opposition to affirmative action in the name of a “color-blind society” (Morgan 2006:143). There were reasons to suspect that the enshrining of jazz as a metaphor for democracy might make a sweet, melodious sound that veiled an unsavory ideological tilt. For one, the language of “individual expression and democratic cooperation” can easily be made congruent with privatization or a narrowly circumscribed concept of democracy’s reach. The planner James Holston notes, for example: “local enactments of democracy may...produce anti-democratic results” (Holston 1999: 171). For Holston, insular or parochial democratic practice was likely to obscure the larger social structure and produce privatization if left unmediated by a central authority.

What’s more, this was not the first time that jazz was mobilized for a questionable democratic symbolism. Peggy Van Eschen, for example, points to the State Department using jazz during the Cold War to symbolically promote American democracy. As a

²¹ Education scholar Mike Rose writes: “At least since the Reagan years, there has been a sustained and savvy effort by conservative writers and politicians to redefine social responsibility, to shrink it and redirect it toward the private sector” (Rose 2009: 6).

genre that involved the visible blending of racial groups, it presented an opportunity for America to present itself on an international stage as a racially harmonious place. America's jazz moved beyond its history of slavery and included black participants as equals. This legacy of symbolically integrated nationalism continues with the TV series *Jazz director* Ken Burns and jazz neo-classicist Wynton Marsalis. Strategically, this approach enabled respect and resources to flow toward jazz in high places. These narrators of jazz as "America's classical music" elevated the genre as a triumph of national unity. This project sanctioned a confusion of symbolic democracy and equality with the realization on the ground of democratic ideals.

By positioning jazz as an audible metaphor for democracy—as the soundtrack of Democracy Realized—equality issues within American society were obscured through the very rhetoric of equality. For example, Wynton Marsalis states "in jazz you have the opportunity to establish your equality based on your ability. That's the chance you have in a democracy. It doesn't mean you're going to be even, but you do have an opportunity" (Marsalis in Fischlin, Heble and Lipsitz 2013: 120). Marsalis' emphasis on equality on the bandstand is reminiscent of the problem of equality before the Courts. For example, critical legal theorist Catherine Mackinnon has written about the need for "changing unequal social relations, rather than monitoring their equal positioning before the law" (Mackinnon 1993:98). What Marsalis probably did not have in mind in his uses of the word "democracy" and "opportunity" was Imani Perry's argument about "democratizing opportunity."

To elaborate on this point: in *More Beautiful and More Terrible: The Embrace and Transcendence of Racial Inequality in the United States*, Perry attends to the

continuity of racial inequality in local communities in spite of a shift in national language that suggests race is not a barrier. Perry notes how institutions replicate disparities. Perry encourages looking toward “the conditions under which people can live freely, with that freedom being defined in terms of ability to participate fully in society and care for oneself and one’s loved ones” (Perry 2011:185). Legal norms of equality are insufficient for addressing the routine practice of inequality. Practical efforts to democratize opportunity shift away from individual attainment and instead focus on community possibility “broadening knowledge, access, and participation all at once” (Perry 2011:187). Marsalis’s vision of integrationist nationalist jazz democracy elides the question of whether or not actual citizens of the nation have the freedom to participate in jazz. Approaching jazz from Perry’s concern of substantive equality in Cleveland, it is clear that the freedom to play the musical metaphor of the nation is not equally available to all. Marsalis’ notion of democratic jazz turns the exception of a few musicians overcoming undemocratic conditions, making a way out of no way, into legitimization for democracy. The instantiation of jazz as a national form confirms the space for the alienated black musical hero within the American nation state. This trope models jazz according to the narrative conventions of western art music historiography, while eliding jazz as the product of “collective activity in decidedly local spaces” (Lipsitz 2007: 98).

In this chapter, I will be attending to how the heroic sovereign master is an ill-suited image for considering access to jazz at the local level in a city separated by race. Here, I argue that inequality undermines free expression. This is made most visible by respondent experiences with inequitable opportunities of schooling. While there are exceptional black and white musicians who heroically achieve professional jazz careers

against the obstacles to their full national and musical citizenship, the infrastructures of support to enable musical citizenship in the national metaphor continue to be shaped by the institutions of an undemocratic past. In the second part of the chapter, I frame Lafayette Carthon's efforts to democratize jazz opportunity in urban Cleveland, while attending to the ways in which he presents a vision of jazz melded not to alienated individuals but to a community broadening music education and access.

Inequality Undermines Free Expression

Ken Burns' documentary *Jazz* presents an upbeat vision of jazz's role in engaging with racial inequality in public education. In one scene, the film presents the overturning of *Plessy V. Ferguson* as a triumphant moment connected to a jazz genius. Sparked by the unprecedented experience of "seeing genius in a black man" in Louis Armstrong, the white teenager—Charles L. Black—set out on an equity-oriented legal career that included joining the litigation team that successfully argued *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. Charles Black was able to transform the discomfort he felt in facing Louis Armstrong as an artistic genius and a second-class citizen into political action through legal channels. He worked with a group of black and white lawyers to persuade the Supreme Court that "segregating school children on the basis of race was unconstitutional" and "Separate but equal no longer could be tolerated under American law" (Burns 2004). For Scott DeVaux, this example epitomizes the political valences of how jazz is presented in the film: as an "art through which black Americans can express their full humanity, and by means of which white Americans can learn to transcend the poisonous heritage of racism" (DeVaux 2015). Missing from DeVaux's analysis of the

film is attention to how race functions in the narrative through artistic exceptionalism and sovereign mastery. A privileged white lawyer came to believe in racial equality because an exceptional black man showed his extraordinary ability. The lawyer's deficit-model of blackness was undone.²² A black genius proved himself. Then white and black lawyers worked together to pass *Brown*. This is a narrative pitched at the same register as the rest of the Burns narrative: exceptional individuals produce spectacular triumphs.

Brown failed to address the problem of structural inequality in education. As Vernon Burton argues, *Brown* is framed as an achievement because it rids whites from culpability for white supremacy, not because it was realized for the benefit of black people (Burton: 2009). Similarly, Derrick Bell contends the decision reworded the rhetoric of equality, but "foreclosed the possibility of recognizing racism as a broadly shared cultural condition" (Bell 2004: 196-197). While *Brown* represents a legal victory, it did not translate into achieved equality or achieved integration.

The reasons for the failure of *Brown* have to do, in part, with the limitations of rights language. As Richard Thompson Ford argues, the decision did not attend to the clearest path for achieving the practical goal of integration in public schools; instead, the decision positioned many to declare victory without ever making substantive change (Ford 2011: 136). Additionally, the Supreme Court made decisions in the 1970s that made it difficult to enact mandates for desegregation. *Milliken v. Bradley* of 1974 largely released suburban districts of responsibility for desegregating the Metropolitan region. This splicing of suburban responsibility for urban public schools almost guaranteed separate and unequal urban schools. Other decisions from the courts similarly reneged on the promise of *Brown*. For example, the 1991 case of *Board of Education of Oklahoma*

²² I take the idea of deficit model from the writing of Elijah Anderson (Anderson 2011: 99).

City v. Dowell, enabled school districts to be free from desegregation orders if they had attempted to comply. Abandonment of court supervision for school desegregation continued with *Freeman v. Pitts* in 1992, allowing schools to end efforts to comply with desegregation, even if aspects of desegregation orders had never been observed. In 1995, *Missouri v. Jenkins* undercut a plan for inner-city schools to attract white students through magnet schools. Likewise, it dismissed arguments for additional spending on inner city schools. Elsewhere, school districts subject to desegregation orders remain segregated on account of a lack of enforcement. In the years since *Brown*, school segregation is permissible so long as the government did not directly decree it (Balkin 2002: 7-8). *Brown*'s principle of racial equality is revered even as meaningful implementation of desegregation remains out of reach.

It's worth noting that the *Brown* decision may have been as important to symbolically promoting an image of U.S. democracy abroad than of realizing it at home. In a parallel to the foreign policy interests served by jazz on the international stage, Mary Dudziak argues that the *Brown* opinion functioned as propaganda. It presented the State Department with a refutation to Soviet Propaganda about America's racist distance from democracy (Dudziak 2000: 113). U.S. foreign policy depended on an egalitarian image of American democracy; the US sought to win over African countries during the cold war through the language of democracy and personal freedom. Jazz and *Brown* are both icons of racial equality for nationalist propaganda, even as the local truths tell a different story. Ongoing inequality prohibits many from participating in the free expression of jazz.

In Cleveland, desegregation efforts achieved minor gains, but ultimately failed in their larger objectives. In 1978, a federal judge ordered the desegregation of Cleveland's

schools via systematic busing. Federal Judge Frank J. Battisti ruled that the Cleveland school system and state Board of Education were “guilty of *de facto* and *de jure* segregation of black students in Cleveland.” Like Columbus, Detroit, Boston, Denver and Los Angeles, violations of *Brown* occurred in Cleveland. In their defense, the school board argued that segregation in schools was the consequence of segregated housing patterns they were not legally compelled to counteract. Cleveland’s busing efforts failed to remedy the rampant segregation of public education that corresponds to Cleveland’s hyper-segregated housing patterns. For Cleveland scholar Edward Miggins, “the problems of the schools were deeply rooted in the challenging social and economic conditions of the central city” (Miggins 2015).

This inequitable opportunity structure shapes who has the freedom to play jazz. Bill Ransom, for example, demonstrates the racialized geography of access to jazz education. At first glance, the career of local bandleader, drummer, percussionist and jazz professor Bill Ransom could be held up as a triumph of the collapse of Cleveland’s racial barriers. Ransom, an African-American, tours with the white blues vocalist Beth Hart and performs in a rock band that does covers of white pop artists like John Mayer. When I saw Ransom at Night Town, the straight-ahead band he was in had two white musicians and two black musicians. His work with the all-black smooth jazz band Forecast reflects the diversity of his engagements: he plays in integrated bands and all-black bands in many different genres. However, his breadth of skills and musical eclecticism has been accomplished against barriers to educational access.

In 1978, the same year that the Cleveland school system was found guilty of *de facto* and *de jure* segregation, Ransom, then a young black musician from a black

neighborhood, surreptitiously enrolled in a predominantly white public school in another neighborhood, in order to gain access to an instrumental music and jazz education. Bill Ransom grew up in the Glenville neighborhood and attended Cleveland public schools through 9th grade. He briefly took lessons at the Cleveland Music School Settlement and played a drum set in neighborhood bands throughout his youth. Additionally, Ransom played in regional and state orchestras as a percussionist. Growing up, he also describes himself as a “closet rocker,” listening to a lot of Grand Funk Railroad. His father listened to straight-ahead jazz, his brother was heavily into R&B as well as rock. The black Methodist church he grew up in had organ, piano and choir. By ninth grade, he knew that he wanted to have a professional career in music. Ransom told me:

I knew that I wanted to go to college for music and I knew that I needed to get a better musical education—in addition to a better education period. That’s not to knock anything about Cleveland public schools or Cleveland municipal schools period. The thing is...money. It’s about money. So, I used my aunt’s address... Luckily, I only had to catch one bus every day. I think it was the three... I did that for three years...

Ransom commuted from his black neighborhood to a predominantly white public school, where he interacted with an extensive list of white jazz peers, many of whom are professional jazz musicians today. Ransom’s experience points to the collision of racial stratification and the more or less successful bid for jazz to take its due place within high culture. Disparate access to education is one way in which hierarchical social relations are felt, even as jazz is now a part of suburban music education.

African-American saxophonist Chris Coles, who went through Cleveland public schools, told me: “The system is set up in such a way so that urban schools fail.” In his view, the suburban schools get all the money:

I went to South. I could have gone to the School of the Arts, but I elected to go to South. Even if you walk into the School of the Arts, there are rats everywhere. How can you build a program that's going to last with that happening? You turn on the auditorium lights and you hear chichichichi [sound of rats scampering]

Coles also pointed to the inadequacy of one of the few opportunities for high school students to play jazz locally: "We have all-city (music?) programs in Cleveland, but the dude running it (the one he was enrolled in?) wasn't a jazz musician. How the fuck do you have a jazz group and the guy running it isn't a jazz musician? There's no way a group like that is going to be sustainable." He told me that suburban schools receive funding for experimental programs and pointed to a couple of black jazz educators working in suburban schools: "Where are those dudes in the inner-city?" For Ransom and Coles, both students of urban public schools, access to jazz education was available in the suburbs.

Ransom and Coles, both African-American jazz musicians from inner-city Cleveland, are exceptions to the ethnographic problem that it's hard to find African-American jazz musicians from the inner-city. The object of music predisposes scholars to ignore people who are silenced through inequitable geographies of opportunity. That Ransom and Coles were able to develop musical voices and musical careers occurred in spite of significant obstacles to musical citizenship. Free creation is stultified by the devastating costs of school segregation. Mundane realities of everyday life mean that Ransom and Coles are the exception, not the rule. The black working class can rightly be celebrated as a wellspring of creativity; yet this immense productivity should be understood as truly remarkable, without obscuring the normative disenfranchisement of urban life. For those who consider straight-ahead jazz to be stale, conservative and boring, it's worth noting that only some people have the freedom to participate in it.

Resources Enable Free Jazz Expression: Suburban White Jazz Musicians

Even in predominantly black suburban schools, the jazz band may be predominantly white. In Cleveland Heights, an integrated inner-ring suburb, the public schools are predominantly black. The high school jazz band, however, is predominantly white. Jesse Samberg, a white drummer who graduated from Cleveland Heights High School and then studied jazz at Oberlin conservatory, shared his thoughts about this dynamic. In our conversations, he pointed to economics, familial support and classical music literacy as the key factors that enabled white students to engage jazz seriously. Additionally, he spoke about the economic context for valuing instrumental music:

You can look at it in a more economic sense...as money became more scarce in the late 2000s, music lessons for your kids is a luxury, use it with your disposable income. And if you don't have a lot of disposable income, it's very hard to prioritize that, unless you've got parents that are very committed to that, if it's a value that they hold, if you just think it's a good idea for the time being, that's going to fall by the wayside...when you're focused on other things and making sure you pay your gas bill. None of this necessarily has to do with race, but it's hard to quantify that stuff.

He also spoke from personal experience.

I can speak to myself and my own experience. My parents valued music lessons because it was something that they pushed for early...taking piano lessons. When I was old enough to pick another instrument, I did. And they seemed to like it. They were kind of, of the mind: if you're good at something and you like it, let's encourage that...I had a lot of encouragement there...showing an aptitude for it. I enjoyed being good at something and wanted to be better. And so, what I can say is that there's always that possibility that people didn't have that. And it doesn't matter what race you are or where you come from, if you don't have a background of people wanting to support you, it's going to be much more difficult to continue.

Samberg was hesitant to make any generalizations along racial lines, but did point to the easy transferability between classical lessons and big band performance. Without saying

anything about black people, he did say that white parents are likely to provide white children with classical music lessons, a realm that provides skills enabling entrance past certain barriers to access.

He does not perceive whiteness as a political identity. If he did, he would have to significantly reframe how he thinks about race and racism, along with choice, individualism, mobility and success. As Bonilla-Silva notes:

we need to undress whites' claims of color blindness before a huge mirror. That mirror must reflect the myriad facts of contemporary whiteness, such as whites living in white neighborhoods, sending their kids to white schools, associating primarily with whites, and having almost all their primary relationships with whites. And whites' absurd claim that these facts of whiteness are just a 'natural thing' must be deflated with research and exposed by journalists showing the social and personal processes that produce each of these aspects of contemporary white supremacy. Researchers also need to turn the analytical lenses on *white* segregation and isolation from minorities and begin documenting how this isolation affects whites' views, emotions, and cognitions about themselves and about minorities. (Bonilla-Silva 2014: 308)

Exposure to music, even black music, does not undermine these ways of uncritically accepting the many dimensions of contemporary whiteness.

Andy Howe, another white musician from the suburbs of Cleveland, describes a mixture of wariness and thankfulness regarding his experiences in a suburban white jazz band in a predominantly black school. On the one hand, it provided him a realm for developing an alternative space for identity formation, outside of normative modes of whiteness. He told me: "White bread America was never going to be me." When I asked him about the suburbanization of jazz, he responded:

I'm thankful for it. I have no idea who I would be. It's just a huge influence on my life. I think that the problem isn't the suburbanization of jazz. I think that the problem is that it isn't in the inner city. It's sad that jazz is not around black people... To me, the issue that I have isn't that jazz spread to the suburbs, but that jazz left where it came from in a lot of ways.

Jazz also provided him a platform for leaving the suburbs to explore Cleveland's remaining black clubs. Through this experience as a commuting white musician, he had the opportunity to develop a sense of community outside of his own family. With his trumpet, he was able to engage with a mixed-race, metropolitan jazz community. This experience provided him an extended group of musical and personal mentors, most of whom were black men:

Staying out until 2 am on a Wednesday night...listening to Sean Jones destroy heaven and earth...he was like a hero. A mythical being. To have someone that's larger than life... It's not based on anything other than the very pure act of watching someone do something amazing.

Howe experienced Sean Jones as going beyond apparently fixed barriers. Jones' performance was mythological because he performed the impossible. Additionally, the scene extended Howe's sense of kin: "It also gives you a sense of community outside of your own family, even if you have a very supportive family. Which I did." The role of an extended family is a fundamental need that, left unmet leads to social anomie: "It's not enough to have a family life. I think everybody needs more than their family...I think that's why we have a lot of problems that we have." The downtown jazz scene provided Howe with an alternative family. In his case, Howe said that he had a "hard head," but the musicians in his extended family were able to talk to him in a way that he would listen: "they're always giving you life lessons." His extended family was mostly older black men: "At some point, it was very commonplace that the only people I hung out were black... I had very little interaction with white people."

The sense of a white male commuting to the urban core collides with what Ingrid Monson calls the "Problem of White Hipness" and the image Norman Mailer erected of the "white Negro." In continuity with Mailer's formulation, Howe sought an escape from

the strictures of middle class white identity in urban clubs. Likewise, his intense admiration for powerful black masculinity has echoes of the primitivizing escape from emasculation through blackness embraced by many hipsters of the beat era. But beyond these superficial signposts of a white youth craving a spontaneous Other, Howe's story is more complex. Unlike the primitivist idealizations of distant free others of Jack Kerouac or Norman Mailer, Howe's tenure might better be understood as a process of socialization and mentorship in to the world of professional jazz musicians. Through mentorship from musicians, Howe told me he got serious about his future and his career. He cut down on drinking and sexual excesses. The downtown jazz community presented him with high standards of musical excellence and instilled in him the discipline required to play jazz as a career.

Still, Howe felt pangs of self-reproach and confusion when he left suburban Cleveland for Oberlin Conservatory. In finding his place within the jazz community as a college student, Howe struggled with the violence that shaped the black experience and the birth of jazz. He anxiously looked at history to consider his alternate family:

I knew there were a huge amount of Africans who didn't make it into the United States because they died on the ship. People jumped off the ship...crammed in like sardines. They make it to America and life expectancy for men working in the fields was three or four years...insane living conditions...working 16-20 hour days with one meal... my people didn't come from that...it was just a hard thing to come to terms with.

Howe is uneasy with his feelings of guilt and is unclear of what to do about it. In college he "felt guilty for even wanting to play jazz...being a white kid growing up and all your heroes are black. You wonder if they accept you." He started feeling tense about his experiences with race and jazz. Part of this came from a framework of comparative

historical deprivation; his Jewish ancestors did not suffer as much as the African ancestors who created the music.

Howe also appeals to jazz history to find a solid grounding of his white jazz subjectivity. Through the musicology and jazz history courses he took at Oberlin, Howe struggled with questions of musical intermixture against the background of an exploitative past: “What I came to was that this is black music. It clearly had more influence from Africa than Europe, although it did have that element.” Yet, although it was black music, important black musicians were interested in white musicians. Howe finds comfort in iconic black musicians who were interested in white musicians, noting that Miles Davis supported Bill Evans and “Louis Armstrong wanted to play with Bix Beiderbecke, they just weren’t physically allowed to do it.” Howe also mentions a Cleveland jazz story pertaining to white saxophonist Ernie Krivda, Howe’s former instructor. Miles Davis once said about Krivda: “I want that white boy in my band.” Krivda did not accept the gig—on account of the sore state of Davis’ health at the time of the offer and his fusion oriented musical direction; still this mythology is a source of pride for many local musicians who learned from Krivda: a man who could have played with Miles.

Howe’s interview presents a clear entry into what’s at stake in the racialized subtexts of jazz history. The way jazz history is told impacts contemporary senses of self for jazz subjectivities. Howe’s complex, self-reflexive engagement with the past is part of the ongoing work musicians do in finding meaning in jazz. Narratives of jazz as enabling complex racial subjectivities collide with the shadow of anti-black violence. Whatever the narrative, though, Howe’s entry into jazz derives largely from the resources available

to him through his public school music program. Compared to students in Cleveland's urban schools, the material resources were rigged in Howe's favor, even as jazz served as a space to choose to embody a kind of whiteness invested in cultural blackness. Howe's white jazz identity owes as much to his access to solid suburban schools and institutional resources as to his black musical family in urban Cleveland. Suburban schools provided him the freedom to play jazz, a music he notes is largely unavailable to inner-city dwellers; yet his travels into downtown black musical life provided him freedom from a constrained white middle class identity. The mentorship he received in both spaces is a process of seeking a selfhood in community that few can access. Because he was not subject to the structural exclusions experienced by most urban black people, Howe was able to access a rich social network of black mentors organized around jazz aesthetics as part of his escape from the alienating constructions of white success.

Suburban Band Directors on Race, Resources, and Access

Although Cleveland Heights High School was about seventy percent black in the late 1990s and early aughts, the audition-only jazz band was predominantly white during this time. James Bane, longtime director of the Cleveland Heights Jazz Band told me that: "the kids that got the lessons got into band." He also asserted that black kids who made it into jazz band tended to have larger success in the long run, pointing to a few exceptional black musicians who came through the Heights program and went on to thrive in New York. For Bane, the few black jazz band members tend to approach the music professionally. Tom Andrews, another music teacher in the district gives his interpretation of the racial demographics of jazz at the high school. For Andrews, the

white jazz band in the black high school is a symptom of the broader racialized contours of instrumental music within the district. For Andrews, many black students leave instrumental music before reaching high school. He explains, “in general, if you look at the entire IMD [Instrumental Music Department], it’s becoming more and more, at the high school level, white. So, your population you’re selecting from is there.” However “at the elementary level, most of the buildings, you’ll have 30 kids, you’ll have five to eight that are white. Some lower, some higher...Roxboro [which has more white kids]...in general, it’s mostly representative of how the population split is, but by the time they get to Heights...it’s, even the choir’s getting that way, not as representative. I don’t know why that happens in the middle-school to high-school transition...the band hovers at about 50/50 even though the district is about 83% or something like that...” For Andrews, the truth is: “we’re losing tons of kids.” This loss would best be understood by looking at the transience levels of the district. Black students tend to move in and out of neighborhoods and school districts more often than white students: “how many of the kindergarteners who come in finish 12th grade?” Thus, Andrews asserts that the racial demographics of instrumental music in the district have more to do with housing insecurity faced disproportionately by black people in the district than by other factors. Because black students were likely to stay in an area for a smaller amount of time, they were more likely to leave instrumental music behind. This explanation is compelling, if very difficult to track because the instability caused by housing insecurity leaves very few reliable data sets.

An African American music director in the neighboring Shaker Heights school district, Samuel Gore, notes the same racial divide in the high school jazz ensemble. Like

Cleveland Heights, the school is integrated. Like Cleveland Heights, the music program and jazz ensemble are disproportionately white. He states

as you start to get more in depth in your craft, the amount of skills and the craft that is required becomes a little bit more extreme. And so, teaching is the same way. Now, you'll start at the elementary. It's a mixed jazz group. We get to the middle school, less so. Now you start to have a disparity. You have a disparity of who is playing in the upper groups and who is playing in the lower groups. And when you get to the high school, it's even more so...

He sees this disparity as a racial disparity only in that it reflects family priorities and resources "it also depends on what your family finds as important...and what can contribute to you overall." Yet he also points to African American economic vulnerability:

I will tell you directly, at a certain point, many African Americans who are not from a white-collar family find it that no...music is not something that my child needs to pursue...they need to pursue something that's going to secure them money, a family...make sure they are situated for the future.

Thus, the instability of the jazz profession deters a significant number of suburban black families from raising jazz-playing children. The employment landscape is too precarious: "you might have a gig there, you might have a gig here...you're not going for it." He illustrates this by telling me about one African-American student: "I had a student who was awesome. The mother said: no way. They don't support that reality. They don't see that reality as something that's vital for their children. If the parents don't see it, then the kids don't see it." Being part of the black community for this director entails a link to financial necessity, including a difficulty in providing private lessons from places such as the Cleveland Music School Settlement:

as you grow older in the African American community, it's like...you know what, if I can't pay the bills, how am I sending you to the [Cleveland Music School] settlement? I certainly can't pay the settlement...what's this music going to do for you really? You just made 50 bucks playing a gig. So?

In this interpretation, because black families have less money than white families, they are not able to prioritize music. Consequently, playing jazz becomes a luxury that families find non-essential:

It's a hierarchy of needs...If you can't take care of this level, this level, how can you begin to think about that...it's like, when you're coming from an African American community, those needs have to be met first, before they can begin to think about upper level stuff. So that's, as you get older and older, that happens to be what it is. I have seen it happen too many times.

Music provides so little financial return that it's hard to justify it in economic terms

I have people ask me at times: where are the African American people in your group? ...music is not something you get back immediately...sometimes its years...sometimes it's many years...that's a problem when you can't see an immediate return on your investment, when you're trying to pay the bills or your parents are footing out that money for you...

This interpretation squares with arguments made by scholars of the racial wealth gap.

Thomas Shapiro and Melvin Oliver, for example, note that inherited wealth or the lack thereof constrains or empowers the kinds of choices people have across racial lines far more than earned income. The racial wealth gap between white and black accounts for white people having significantly more time, resources and stability to enter jazz as a profession. Gore notes that becoming a jazz musician only makes sense as a trajectory if there is financial backup. He points to a few jazz musicians who were phenomenal players in high school, but are still working day to day to make ends meet. Playing jazz is “not viable.” What's more

it's certainly not viable if you don't have any backup at all...they didn't have to worry about...people struggling at home and they're trying to send you to music lessons. It's a different sort of reality. That's what I find happening. I think that's what...it starts to split. The split is social, it's cultural and it's economic.

From his perspective, there are real differences in who becomes a musician, but the primary enabling possibility is coming from a family with money. Financial privilege becomes the rule as far as who pursues becoming a musician. He admits, “There are exceptions to the rule. I was an exception to the rule. But you know, I paid my own stuff. I paid my own way to the Settlement. I worked and paid my own lessons.” He names another black musician who “did the same thing because our people didn’t have money.” However, he noted

as my parents started to get older...and it fell on me to take care of them, well that’s a little harder...to say: I’m just going to go out and do the jazz scene, when there’s no money. You know. No money. No health insurance. There’s nothing...If you don’t have a family you’re responsible for. And you’re single and it’s just. You. Go for it. Do all you want. But, you know...I’m only saying that’s one of the factors of why the split starts to happen...I guess you have to make a choice. Is music your thing? Your only thing? You know, and, some people, don’t have to make that decision. And if you don’t have to make that decision and you have a support group, it’s a lot easier to do what you do. If you do have to make that decision, it’s a problem...My family has to sacrifice if I have to do this...that’s the way it is. That’s the reality of it all.

Here, he makes racial generalizations that are about classed forms of belonging to race. Black people are presented as having fewer resources than white people. From a sociological perspective, this is true. It is one of the repercussions of the racial wealth gap. As whites grow older, they are likely to receive funds from their family in the form of inheritance that originates in white-only government supported loans. As black people age, the inverse is likely to be true, as they are likely to need to support dependents who are no longer able to work and did not receive these loans.

The music directors I spoke with in Shaker and Cleveland Heights point to greater housing stability, greater financial resources and greater temporal resources to explain why white suburban students are more likely to pursue high school jazz than black

suburbanites. They provide the beginning of a key counter-narrative to simplistic constructions of black youth as solely interested in hip-hop. As with arguments seeking to pathologize black youth as underachievers invested in the mythologies and aesthetics of urban poverty, the supposed lack of interest in jazz on the part of black youth appears more as a product of the racial-wealth gap and white resource hoarding, then of a culture of poverty.²³

Urban Solutions Tri-C

One attempt to connect jazz and urban youth came through the downtown community college. This effort at democratizing opportunity succeeded only in part and ended up reproducing the disparities of the city and suburbs. Cuyahoga Community College is an institution in downtown Cleveland that houses a jazz festival and provides jazz education programs for youth, high school and college students. For the former vice president of the Northeast Ohio Jazz Society, Fred Landers, the Tri-C Jazz Fest must continue to grow and thrive in order to connect young people to the music. Coming from a jazz society with an older membership, Landers states, “the Jazz Fest is our past and our future” (Landers in Farkas 2013). Morse, another society member and Jazz Fest sponsor states that jazz music creates a shared cosmopolitan space. It “has the unique ability to bridge age, race, economics, gender and class. Jazz brings people together from all backgrounds and different walks of life. That is significant” (Morse in Farkas 2013). Yet, for other commentators, the starkness of the racial division is painfully evident at Cleveland’s major jazz festival, the Tri-C jazz festival.

²³ See Amanda Lewis and John Diamond for an argument about “opportunity hoarding” by whites in integrated schools (Lewis and Diamond 2015: 178).

The festival sponsors educational days that showcase youth from the metropolitan area. According to Terri Pontremoli, one of the leading forces behind the jazz festival: “one of the things that was so glaring...educational days would happen and buses would all pull up to the schools...all the kids that got up to play were from the suburbs and were white...all the audiences were black and from the city schools...they had no opportunity is really what it was.” Although not all of these groups were fully one race or the other, Pontremoli’s statement reinforces the association between the white suburbs and access to opportunity within the world of jazz and urban areas as black spaces with little such access. One way in which Tri-C engaged this dynamic was by creating a significant number of scholarships for Cleveland public school kids through their Excellence in Music program.

The Tri-C Jazz Festival’s Excellence in Music program was launched in 1994. Journalist Diane Tittle writes that it was created to fulfill an unmet need: “JazzFest program director Max Dehn is determined to see that at least some Cleveland school children receive the musical training public schools can no longer afford to provide” (Tittle 2004: 45). Tri-C secured funding from the Cleveland Foundation and the George Gund Foundation to provide lessons for Cleveland School of the Arts (CSA) students interested in jazz. Additionally Oberlin College undergraduates were recruited to teach fundamentals while composer Wendell Logan was engaged to teach improvisation and jazz theory. Initially, other instructors included pianist Neal Creque, saxophonist Kent Engelhardt, trumpeter Kenny Davis, and drummer Greg Bandy. Additionally, Cleveland School of the Arts faculty members including Earl Cohen, Greg Morre, and Bill Woods provided their expertise on Saturday mornings. JazzFest, under the leadership of Dehn

pursued a vision of “creating of a conservatory-quality music instruction program for arts-starved Cleveland Municipal School District students” (Tittle 1994: 42). This initiative was central to turning Tri-C into a center for jazz studies. Yet, youth living in the suburbs were soon clamoring to gain admission to the program, held on Saturdays at Cuyahoga Community College’s Metro Campus: “It was a first to have suburban kids breaking down the doors to get into something designed for the Cleveland public schools.” In spite of its formal interest in engaging urban youth, the Cuyahoga Community College had limited success in reaching its targeting demographic, instead attracting a disproportionate number of white suburbanites.

The Carthon Conservatory

Another urban location attempting to challenge the way inequality undermines free expression is Lafayette Carthon’s project to teach jazz, alongside other genres, to urban youth. Carthon democratizes opportunity, establishing a vibrant local jazz community space. During my field work, I became involved in “Faith Night,” Lafayette Carthon’s city-wide rehearsal on Monday evenings in the city of Cleveland. These rehearsals began at seven in the evening with a choir rehearsal, followed by an open jam that lasted until eleven or later. Faith Night attracted mostly black musicians living in the urban community and connected through church. The night is the central gathering time for Lafayette Carthon’s community conservatory.

The Conservatory is oriented to providing access to musical skills that will enable urban Clevelanders to flourish in the world of professional music, in addition to connecting with adults interested in improving musical abilities. In a culture in which

schools are eliminating arts and music, the community conservatory model presents college level music study that is free and accessible. Carthon states that the conservatory provides an opportunity to get youth a pre-professional skill-set and an eclecticism that is necessary for entering college, noting, “we can prepare these kids for college, make sure they have the music that they need to have.” The conservatory in-progress focuses on ages five to twenty-six and continuing education. The school approaches music by emphasizing music most popular among the students themselves as well as other material Carthon considers to be important for preparing students.

Lafayette Carthon grew up in urban Cleveland in a home “where my parents were Christian by faith. So, most of the stuff that was musically happening was basically happening in the context of the church.” A friend of the family started giving Carthon piano lessons when he was around seven years old. Additionally, he began to “mess around with a piano” at the church where his father was associate pastor. Starting in eighth grade, he attended the Cleveland School of the Arts. The offerings at this school were: “pretty eclectic, considering. We did jazz of course. Classical and gospel...show tunes and stuff like that.” He developed as a gospel, jazz and classical musician through private piano classes.

After graduating from the School of the Arts, Carthon, toured with the popular gospel group, The Winans, served as musical director for R. Kelly and recorded with many pop musicians, including Michael Jackson and Celine Dion. He has since returned to Cleveland where he finished a degree in music education at Oberlin and started the community conservatory in the city:

The Carthon conservatory...the vision is...to take the best of the school of arts.
The best of Oberlin, the best of Tri-C... The best of what I’ve learned in the Faith

community. All of those things, bring them together under one roof. Without the red tape.

He highly values teaching in the community where he lives and is critical of the suburban teachers who come into the inner city but don't care about the kids: "How can you talk about urban life and not talk about suburban life?" He is interested in his conservatory serving a variety of functions for the well-being of the black community, critiquing urban teachers who are actually suburban commuters, underserving urban youth. Carthon's alternative community conservatory includes getting kids off the street. He also is creating programs that teach youth to eat healthily as that is "inextricably connected to the arts." He reminds students that the odd hours and rigors of travel can negatively impact the health and well-being of musicians.

Carthon's framework involves a conceptualization of a black community and a white community that are divided by access to education and access to wealth. His conservatory is a musical project to create a healthy community within this divided landscape. Here, music brings together people who have been forced together. Carthon presents an expansive vision for his students, connected to a broad vision of community and possibilities for social transformation.

You see how these things are interconnected...you start to see how...people don't really want to have truth we can have...we can make a difference. We're trying to effect a larger picture by raising up soldiers that have love for God, love for people, and know how to use their gift to make change.

Carthon began as a performer. He tells me that performing is about trying to connect with people and a higher power.

As a musician, when I'm performing, I'm just performing. I'm trying to connect horizontally out there at Opus. At church or in a worship setting, I'm trying to connect vertically as well as horizontally. Trying to encourage them to connect vertically. That's what I'm thinking about when I'm performing.

For Carthon, every musical source encountered gets incorporated intentionally or not into future musical expressions. Genre distinctions are highly relevant to him in his strategic performance of self and in preparing students to thrive in distinct genre frameworks. That being said, he presents a vision of musical subjectivity that is shaped by the complexity of cosmopolitan experience.

Nowadays, everything is multicultural in that sense because we're a product of the culture. And I have influences all the way around. Jazz, pop, rock, there's no purist. People use that word. You are affected...there's no purist. You're affected by what's going on around you, period. We all have our preferences, things that we focus on. Once it goes in your ear, you can't say it didn't just play a part in what you just composed.

The self, whether black or white, defined within whatever genre market, nevertheless is shaped by all sonic components of the environment. Preparing urban youth to become professional, Carthon not only reaches out to musical tastes, he also seeks to prepare them for an array of musical opportunities.

At one conservatory event I attended, Carthon workshopped a tune by Robert Glasper. Glasper has achieved fame for integrating gospel voicings in collaboration with R&B artists in recordings classified as jazz on Blue Note. Carthon states:

We did a study on one of Robert Glasper's tunes. Jazz is all over. When we get into the master class...the whole thing is one big eclectic something. There's so much going on. We're swinging. We're rocking. You know what I'm saying. We're neo-souling; we're gospel. We're doing it at all.

Not only is Carthon able to reach a variety of interests through engaging with a genre-blending artist like Glasper with a broad appeal, he also prepares students for a variety of future work opportunities this way. Carthon's pedagogical approach is all about connecting:

We're always connecting. I just think it's a good education. I just... it's an approach, but I think it's bigger than just an approach. Pedagogically, to me that's a foundational principle of teaching. Got to come out of the music. Music came first and theory came second... and I fill in the gaps. If you're not interested, I show you why you need to be interested and why.

This heterogeneity of approach and respect for impurity contrasts sharply with narratives that seek to frame jazz as a superior form, unconnected to popular pleasures. The Carthon conservatory draws across musical source material in an intermingling that would seem jarring if it weren't for Carthon's ability to draw links and lessons from seemingly unrelated material. For example, Carthon challenges students to identify common chord progressions across diverse repertoires. The same skills can go into producing very different sounds.

We just did Rihanna. We'll do Coltrane. We try to do it all to try to paint a broad picture...this is what these people have done this is how it's relevant to what we're doing now. Learn it. Respect that genre. We teach that big. Respect the genre. Young people I teach, if I'm gonna do hip hop, I'm going to respect the genre. If I'm going to do classical, respect the genre. Know what are the genre does and don'ts.

Carthon's pedagogy is explicitly geared toward teaching versatile performers who are grounded in an expansive, virtuous musicality and the conventions of specific genres.

Know what's appropriate when performing. In this type of performance setting for this type of music. Know what's acceptable behavior and non-acceptable behavior. Know what's acceptable and not acceptable in a classroom setting. Just like they're differences in how we clap. You don't clap between movements. In gospel, you clap all the way through. Hahaha. In certain cultures, it's proper to belch after you eat. In others, it's not. You gotta respect. It goes back to love. It goes back to the golden rule... There's a right way to do music and a wrong way.

Respect, for Carthon, entails a complex engagement of self and other that is layered and complex with highly particular musical and social contexts. Though deeply grounded in Christian values, he also presents learners with a capacious vision of self and other.

You are made up of a multiplicity of people, ideas, all of those things. We all are. We're affected by what we see, what we hear... I love that movie "Crash"²⁴...people have these conceptions and these misconceptions. Man. They're a part of us. Whether you like it or not. There's no purity... The stuff you're doing and the lines you're using. Ok. Let me tell you about the development of music.

In one lesson, Carthon switched from the bass-line to an early 90s G-Funk hip-hop classic, to the explication of a Bach chord progress. His disparate associations and expansive musical knowledge shake artificial enclosures of categorical genre purity at their core.

At the Carthon Conservatory, purity is eschewed, even as Carthon teaches students to self-consciously inhabit generic conventions. Learning to be a musical cosmopolitan with a diverse skillset is not only musically desirable, it's also professionally necessary for urban youth seeking professional standing in a competitive music marketplace. Carthon thus is training a generation of musicians to learn the arts of metamorphosis. This is teaching musicians to be skilled actors who can perform any role asked of them. Still, this space of empowering students to learn the arts of musical metamorphosis and competency across genre occurs within a black neighborhood and emerges out of a key institution of black support. Thus, the aesthetic agency and capacity to self-fashion across genres occurs within an infrastructure of support emerging against the spatial containment constricting material power and agency. Jazz is an essential element of this sweeping skillset of musical omnivores, with its broad impact across genres and the dexterity it requires to transform the musical self fluidly. The musicians Carthon is training are jazz musicians certainly; they are also community musicians and

²⁴ Crash is a film directed by Paul Haggis about overlapping lives in a city across many categorical forms of difference. Throughout the film, as Roger Ebert notes, "peoples' assumptions prevent them from seeing the actual person before standing before them" (Ebert 2005).

musicians learning what it means to meet the demands of diverse audiences. Unlike Marsalis, Carthon's approach to musicianship does not rigidly assume the cultural superiority of one music over another. Instead, Carthon's classroom pedagogy is attuned to improvising the conjunctures of different tastes and trajectories, insisting on musical interconnection, and disavowing purity. Carthon's project is still a remedial educational project for urban youth otherwise denied fundamental forms of democratic access on account of ongoing segregation.

THE ACCOMPANIMENT

Destabilizing the Autonomous Male and the Autonomous Work of Art: Reconsidering Aesthetic Agency

In music scholarship, important work has been done destabilizing the myth of autonomous masculine creative agents. Indeed, the positioning of masculinity as a topic of scrutiny productively opens an array of important questions that de-stabilize common norms. Musicologists Ian Biddle and Kristen Gibson note that "when masculinity is itself constituted as an object of study (when, that is, men cease to operate as the silent wielders of knowledge) then the position of masculine creativity and its relation to musical practice comes under intense scrutiny" (Biddle and Gibson 2009: 10). Jazz scholar Alex Stewart notes that "within the almost exclusively male or homosocial universe of jazz, concepts of individual autonomy also are bound up intimately with masculine roles" (Stewart 2007: 12). Feminist scholars have met fierce resistance in classical music as they "infringe on the supposed purity of 'absolute' music" (Stewart 2007: 13). What's more, as Stewart notes, feminist theory has "threatened established hierarchies of expertise among jazz collectors, discographers, critics, historians, and the like" (Stewart 2007: 13).

In order to analyze how race as group position works with aesthetic questions and different ways of valuing jazz, I modify Ingrid Monson's use of "aesthetic agency." In *Freedom Sounds*, Monson writes about the importance to jazz history of the capacity for musicians to draw from many sources and self-fashion themselves accordingly. This "aesthetic agency" and the mobility of aesthetics provide a useful way out of reductionist visions of music along racial lines. Part of being a jazz musician is the ability to produce a sound that emerges from the mobility of culture and diverse influences. Still, the segregated landscape of Cleveland shapes the kinds of choices people have to choose from. Structural racism limits freedom.²⁵ It prevents people from devising unlimited options. Inequality undermines free expression.

Drawing from Feminist theory, I re-conceptualize aesthetic agency by drawing from critiques of freedom that, to quote Dustin Ellis Howes, are overly reliant upon understandings of individual autonomy at the expense of social and political context" (Howes 2016: 146). Aesthetic agency in this project means two things: First, a sense of agency and capacity to engage with an interdependent relationship with a community is what I am labeling *relational aesthetic agency*.²⁶ This conceptualization of agency foregrounds the audience-performer relationship as the underpinning of agency. This view of "aesthetic agency" also undercuts conceptualizations of aesthetics that exist outside of the social. Perhaps this valuing of jazz is not about aesthetics at all, so much as it's about the way in which musicians are always-already collaborating with others.

²⁵ C. Wright Mills writes: "Freedom is not merely the opportunity to do as one pleases; neither is it merely the opportunity to choose between set alternatives. Freedom is, first of all, the chance to formulate the available choices, to argue over them—and then, the opportunity to choose" (Mills 2000: 174).

²⁶ See Elizabeth Anker on how relations of power shape the meaning of freedom: "freedom must be understood and practiced within conditions of profound social interdependence ... Understanding freedom through interdependence attends to, rather than disavows, individuals' political, social, and economic reliance on others, and accounts for heteronomous structural hierarchies that condition what freedom entails and how it is experienced for different populations" (Anker 2012: 211).

Second, what I term *sovereign mastery in aesthetic agency* is a project attuned to the creative internalization of technique, vocabulary and tradition that enables the musical speaking of the self. The former is about attunement to audience and the second is about attunement to artistic authenticity. Are these two projects at odds?

I trace this second position to bebop. It is very close to Monson's initial definition of aesthetic agency. The bebop project of black musicians asserting themselves as sovereign masters had an important contextual racial politics in which black artists claimed artistic self-determination against the commonplace white appropriations of swing. This same perception of sovereign mastery in aesthetic agency has been recontextualized in a racialized geography that loses some of the politics of black mastery, yet reinscribes what Judith Butler calls the "disavowed dependency at the heart of the masculinist idea of the body" (Butler 2014: 11).²⁷

By mobilizing these two visions of aesthetic agency and charting how they play out in social life, I'm noting the ways in which the black tradition of turning segregation into congregation points to a tradition of jazz relationality (Lewis 1991). Jazz becomes a means of interdependent community thriving. On the other hand, the structural racism and rewards for whiteness can undergird a vision of aesthetic agency as sovereign mastery, in which the dependence of white people on other white people and legacies of exploitative group relationships are ignored in favor of a vision of the self-sufficient, independent subject. Whereas relational aesthetic agency foregrounds an infrastructure of interdependence, sovereign mastery functions under Judith Butler's idea that there is no "dependency on infrastructural conditions and legacies of discourse and institutional

²⁷ Butler foregrounds a concept of the body as dependent on infrastructural conditions and formulates the subject as fundamentally dependent and interdependent.

power that precede and condition our existence” (Butler 2014: 11).

In Cleveland jazz, there’s a both/and of these two models: sovereign-masters emerge out of musical communities, even as they deny this social sustenance. Relational creative subjects praise the heroism of sovereign masters. Questions of aesthetic agency in jazz are valuable in and of themselves. It is an object of study that is also valuable for thinking outside discourses of cultural ownership and consumption. These discourses are limited for the same reason David Graeber critiques the discourse of consumption in carrying “within it a tacit cosmology, a theory of human desire and fulfillment whose implications we would do well to think about” (Graeber 2011: 491). Improvisation studies may be most compelling for its ability to disrupt this tacit cosmology. It suggests the future may be different from the past. Desires and fulfillments may begin to look different through the co-creations of improvisational agency. The emphasis on co-creation points to the role of relations between people—and infrastructures of support—in the realization of value.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I show how the failures of substantive school desegregation, along with categorical constraints, such as the racial wealth gap, undermine the ability of all Clevelanders to have democratic access to jazz expression. I also point to efforts by Cuyahoga Community College and Carthage Conservatory to democratize musical opportunity within this context. Throughout all of these narratives, white people are constructed as having access to more resources than black people, even as the intercultural connections of jazz histories are brought to the foreground. This baseline

inequality of power suggests how race is not just encoded in music, it is also in the institutions and resources that empower people to become musicians.

Bill Ransom is a black musician who improvised a strategy for entering into a white school in order to receive rigorous jazz training. The differing views on the Tri-C jazz program suggest that even if jazz is a bridge, there is a good possibility of racial stratification in who gets to cross that bridge. In integrated suburban schools, jazz functions as a form of agency that is challenged at every turn because of histories of racial inequality. The perspective of some teachers suggests that white kids are the ones who are going to participate in jazz, given the financial vulnerability and housing insecurity of black people who are too busy seeking an economic footing in order to afford to participate seriously in this financially questionable musical symbol of American freedom and equality. For others, however, jazz presents a choice for a different kind of whiteness. It presents the possibility of doing whiteness otherwise, of being a different kind of white person. Jazz thus provides a complex form of aesthetic agency for white people, as it holds out the possibility of escape from a racial script associating whiteness with certain kinds of value, offering the possibility of metamorphosis into new kinds of sociality and new places of belonging. Thus, even as jazz competency depends on material capital, it also threatens to undermine the primacy of exchange value or cultural capital turned into mastery.

At the Carthon Conservatory, the “white community” and the “black community” are conceptualized as divided by wealth and access to education. Even so, the pedagogy of the school is concertedly anti-essentialist, training young performers to function as genre-crossing chameleons. At the conservatory, no music is pure, even as the legacies of

structural racism are undeniable. Here, jazz provides an important means of metamorphosis and escape from spatial containment for people of color who see developing plural aesthetic competences as attuned as much to professionalization as to seeking some kind of authenticity of self. The mobility of jazz across borders presents complex engagements with racial contexts. For some whites, it opens up some visions of agency that subvert hegemonic racial scripts. For black people, jazz musicians follow the grooves laid down by jazz across borders to access new material and spatial possibilities.

CHAPTER 3
Genre Uplift in Haunted Venues: How Racist Stereotypes and Spatial Apartheid
Haunt Cleveland Jazz

The fragmentation and subdivision of black music into an ever increasing proliferation of styles and genres which makes a nonsense of this polar opposition between progress and dilution has also contributed to a situation in which authenticity emerges among the music makers as a highly charged and bitterly contested issue.
—Paul Gilroy (1993: 96)

This is not a commingling town.
—Bryan Gresham, owner of several Cleveland jazz clubs

Segregated space—and its corresponding inequitable geography of opportunity—is part of the lens through which people understand the definitional politics of genre in the city of Cleveland. Genre disputes are pitched at a particular level because of the segregation of people in the city. The canonical narrative of jazz as American heroism and transcendent art has its uses, at some point, for almost everyone professionally categorized as associated with jazz. This utility explains what David Ake calls “official” discourse. Ake notes that this official line has a purpose: “they want to enhance the general respect, and so, too, the remuneration, accorded to themselves and others in their profession” (Ake 2010: 57). Nationalist, artistic transcendence invites respect and remuneration. Genre uplift leaves little space for framing black difference; it is troubled by the racial politics of marketing music amidst American apartheid. The elevated tone of uplift discourse evades the persistence of structural segregation.

Real jazz is a shifting target that says more about the person invoking it than about the music being invoked. Jazz discourse walks, and often stumbles, on a fine line between respectability politics and allegiance to authenticating discourses of African-American culture. Visions of aesthetic *realness* and *real jazz* play out in a context in

which the terrain is shaped by black spatial containment. Jazz subgenre, place and race are conflated in local perceptions.

The Genre of the Undead: The Racial Politics of Historical Memory and Popular Pleasure

Jazz is dead.

—John Lennon (in Holt 2007: 86)

In 1975, Nat Hentoff wrote in the introduction to *The Jazz Life* that he feared jazz was becoming “an historical artifact.” Rock had shown a “hegemony over popular music” beginning in the 1960s that resulted in “a bleak decade for jazz...many of those young listeners—who might in earlier decades, have certified their hipness by joining the auditors and spectators of the jazz life—were lost instead to rock” (Hentoff in Holt 2007: 85). Rock captured part of the jazz market’s share. What’s more, jazz people were veering away from the popular market. Jazz was curating itself into exclusivity. Fabian Holt notes that “the dominant genre discourse distanced itself from popular music” (Holt 2007: 88).

Many Clevelanders assert that the ascendancy of rock was co-extensive with the decline in jazz. Others point to alternative narratives of decline: one Cleveland resident I spoke with explained that resources left the city, so the music left too. For another, the jazz scene was forced out. I asked him what happened to the rich historical neighborhood at 105th and Euclid. He responded with three words: “The Cleveland Clinic.” That is, there is a widely-held perception that the clinic, Cleveland’s largest employer and one of the highest ranked hospitals in the world, took over the African-American neighborhood

where jazz once flourished. Another view is that “real jazz” was displaced by the smooth variety. Others say people simply stopped being interested in jazz.

My main point is that jazz’s genre decline can never be disconnected from the haunting of urban inequality and spatial containment. Jazz occupies a contradictory position as a black cultural activity that requires elite resources in a city where few are available. The haunting of spatial apartheid fundamentally shapes the contestation over genre and jazz respectability. The structuring of racialized boundaries in the city haunts the circumscribed venues of Cleveland, even as they tend toward respectability; jazz is constructed as a zero-sum game in which tensions of race, genre and cultural hierarchy are co-constructed and often conflated.

Ernie Krivda: The Hauntings and Genre Politics of Narrativizing Jazz’s Decline Jazz Essentialism in a Context of Artificially Limited Space

Ernie Krivda is a celebrated tenor saxophonist and currently directs the Cuyahoga Community College jazz program in Cleveland. I sat down with Krivda at a coffee shop one afternoon in University Circle, blocks away from what had been the black cultural hub of the city during his teenage years in the early 1960s. We were also located near several high art institutions and university environments that sponsor jazz. During our interview, Krivda explained how the jazz scene in the area had changed: politicization and institutionalization of the music meant an increasing indifference to audience concerns.

Ernie Krivda came of age performing in the legendary club scene at 105th and Euclid. He presents a reading of jazz, race, and the city that remains connected to that

scene. Krivda is white and he's from suburban Garfield Heights, even as he has become one of the key torchbearers of urban Cleveland jazz. When I spoke with him about growing up in during the 1950s and 1960s, he told me:

Cleveland, up to this point, is a jazz city. Jazz is integral to the nightlife of the city, had been for quite sometimes...it is right in the middle of a circle of cities...Detroit, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Columbus, Indianapolis, Chicago...Cleveland always was the central point on the old Midwest circuit...so, bands, music would always come through Cleveland...and of course, keep in mind this was time when bands would come into the city and be there for a considerable period of time. You know, 3 months, 2 months, a year. And the music is all over the place. And it's happening.

Krivda told me about an important street on Euclid Avenue:

Euclid Avenue...105th and Euclid, which we used to refer to as the Corner was...from 107th down past 100th, there was this confluence of jazz clubs all together...at any particular time, there would be 13 operating jazz rooms.

He pointed out that the area attracted black workers from White Motors:

In the area too was White Motors...three shifts going...guys would get offa work. And they would come and they would hang. This was the black middle class...employed heavily at White Motors. They would blow off steam over here in the area. This is just one particular part of the city, but it was very active in terms of jazz.

This was the area of the city where Krivda cut his teeth as a musician. Although geographically very close to University Circle institutions, the two areas did not mix: "Somehow, for a long time, except for little fringe elements, these two things, these two cultures, did not come in contact with one another." In his conception: "The music is going on. For people like me, I'm just into the music...nobody's bothering anybody."

With the 1960s, more intermixing began to occur between the denizens of university circle and the established club crowd.

You have a rapidly developing civil rights movement and anti-war movement that college students are embracing...A club opens up called Le Cave right on Euclid avenue...Le Cave basically was a folk club...all of a sudden, we have young

white students going into the midst of what is basically a red-light district. Now the purposes are crossed. You have developing civil rights movement, Black Muslims passing out *Muhammed Speaks*. They're pushing, pushing, pushing. Now, all of a sudden there's tension, building tension. The Police see the tension. Police don't like the tension. They like normal, smooth everything kind of working... Now they're arresting people... racial tensions are building... little white girls are down going to le Cave to sing songs of discontent... it's not what it used to be... bad things happen...

For Krivda, the scene begins to change and

the music starts changing too... in the 1960s is the beginning of the free jazz movement... music was becoming more political, so writers are latching onto the music of Albert Ayler, who's a Clevelander, who I played a session with—"we want him out" his band from some clubs, because nobody could stand that stuff. His expression and that free expression started to become political and accepted big time by jazz journalists who were championing this kind of thing. Now, people didn't like that. Writers liked it. Political types liked it. Now, it wasn't this communal, free-flowing, jazz people together kind of thing. It was at cross-purposes.

It is the politicization of aesthetics, for Krivda, that alienates the music from the communal jazz sensibility. Political people and formalist critics embraced the secessionist discord of free jazz. Here, the dissonant aesthetics and social awareness represented by free jazz trumps good time music. Protest displaces pleasure.

...the influx of free jazz players, hooking up with the political, the civil rights movement was behind... you might want to look up LeRoi Jones and his connection to free jazz... the growth of the movement and the music along with it... This is like organ trios. *Groovin'*. People having a good time. Now it's not about having a good time. Now it's about social awareness and protest—at least coming into the thing. People are uncomfortable with it. And it's reflected in the clubs' attitude toward the musicians and the way the musicians are approaching the music now. The musicians are taking part in this now. There's a split happening.

For Krivda, jazz was splintering off from pleasure: "it generally was a good time. It was fun. Jazz was part of people's good time. And this is what was changing with the growth... the thing for your purposes... you're seeing the change." The contextualized affective responses of the organ trio and the old neighborhood were at odds with an

affective sonic politics of protest. Free jazz brought a punctum sonics that disrupted the flow of tradition in black clubs.

Krivda notes how important the Euclid and 105th area was in his development as a young musician. He describes himself as “absolutely apolitical, I couldn’t give a rat’s ass about anything except the music.” During this time, he’s focusing on music and he’s watching the area change. On July 18, 1966, the Hough Riots broke out.²⁸ At the time of the riots, he was playing in the Lucky Bar. For Krivda, it was

an honor to play at the Lucky Bar on Cedar because Cedar was really the jewel of the black community. It was uniquely black and it was very special...to be able to play there as a young white musician was an honor. I was always very pleased to be playing there.

Krivda’s band for the gig included “Willis Lymon, another white guy, and Jack Town, a great drummer, so we’re rehearsing for the gig. Jack Tom says: ‘we got to get it together, we’re playing on Cedar. On Cedar.’” For all the musicians, playing at the Lucky Bar is “a big deal.” On the night of the riots, “the owner says: get in your car and go. Just drive real fast.” According to Krivda, the riots killed this eminently pleasurable scene:

That’s when the riots started, right there. After that, then it was gone. It was all gone. It was gone because the cultural dynamic was the reason that the music existed in such vibrancy at one particular point and then the cultural dynamic changed to make it disappear.

The reason why jazz disappeared, for Krivda, was because audiences hated free jazz.

Audiences, “hated the free jazz influence. And they hated the political, angry aspect of the free jazz.” Krivda writes:

Jazz was never the same because...first of all, people in the late 60s, people hated it...now: a lot of times people are like it’s a drag because they’re so indifferent to it. Well, I was there when they hated it. Setting up on the stand, people would go:

²⁸ Triggered by a dispute over a glass of water, during a summer full of racial tension—the riots in the Hough area of Cleveland lasted from July 18th until July 24th, after Cleveland’s mayor had called the National Guard.

You're not going to be playing any of that jazz, are you? They hated it. Because of what it represented. Because it became so political. The Free Jazz Movement. You would think, by the way people were writing about music at that time, that was the only jazz that was happening. If you weren't in that, you were not with it.

According to Krivda, Euclid and 105th lost its good time sensibility:

The black community turned to Motown and fun and dancing. They wanted to have a good time. And jazz no longer became people's good time. That was all very clear and demonstrated in a very vivid manner right over here [105th and Euclid]. I'm sure other cities have similar things.

After the riots, Krivda states that free jazz was the only acceptable thing:

there was all kinds of things being played, but the only kind of stuff that was accepted...if you understand the way jazz goes. There's what's happening now, kind of thing and that's what's happening. And if you aren't doing that, then you aren't happening. The pressure to do that was...jazz musicians...always trying to stay out front with it...always trying to be really relevant to what's going down now

For Krivda, this need for musicians to be with the moment has shifted slightly because it has been around longer:

The music now has a history...in 1960, you were less than 40 years removed from Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Jelly Roll Morton, New Orleans...that's not a long time. That's not a long time at all...

In the 1960s, Krivda experienced jazz differently:

At that point, the music didn't have a history that was thought of as a history. It was just one fad after another. That was a very strong pull for musicians to be part of the latest thing. Now, you want to do this so you get hired and work, stuff like that.

Free jazz, for Krivda, is the cause of work disappearing, even as, ironically, musicians felt faddishly compelled to participate in the genre. And he states that jazz was also displaced by other genres:

Rock and Roll really became a really powerful force. And it became a powerful force here. And when I talk about Rock and Roll...I'm talking about Rhythm and Blues, Funk and things like that...those things kind of displaced jazz in the black community. Now, this is not exactly the way things were in Detroit, for

example...Detroit retains to this day a very strong identification with jazz, so does Chicago, Pittsburgh more so than Cleveland...

Krivda notes that it “was almost like something died and never really recovered.”

After the end of the Euclid and 105th era, Krivda points to the Smiling Dog era of the 1970s, a scene to which he was intimately connected. During this time, Krivda plays very regularly at this venue:

I’m playing at the Smiling Dog Saloon in the house band, almost all the time, for the jazz things, for 6 nights a week, I’m playing opposite from every working jazz band at the time. Cannonball Adderley, Stan Getz, McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock, Horace Silver...I can just...Les McCann, Woody Shaw, Freddie Hubbard...just go on and on and on and on and name every band that played there, 6 nights a week.

However, in time, changes in concert promotion alter the dynamic:

As the 70s started to move on, you have the Belkin Brothers, all of a sudden, they started to become a well-known thing. They would present concerts. Now, all of the sudden. First of all, there was the idea of the rock concert. At one time, that was a new thing. What it meant was that musicians, bands could play concerts and in a single night make five, ten times more than they would make in a club. This started happening in jazz too. They started having these jazz concerts. Musicians would sign with the Belkins to do concerts, but they couldn’t play clubs. The Smiling Dog was losing its money-makers to the concert scene and they couldn’t stay open. And that couldn’t exist anymore.

Krivda notes that groups like Weather Report started playing concerts whereas they had once performed at the Smiling Dog. He’s critical of festivals because they aren’t strictly about music. He states:

Festivals did well, because they were like events. And people are drawn to events. It’s not so much their...when you have the baseball game, there are about five thousand people that are baseball fans that are there to see the baseball game. And all of the rest of them are fringe. I’m not saying that they don’t like baseball...it was a happening. You’re getting fringe people that don’t know there are three outs in an inning...it’s a happening...

This tendency toward events was particularly strong in Cleveland:

Cleveland is big on events. They're much bigger on events than they're on any particular "what that event is about." Because events make them feel like they're part of something important because their inferiority complex...

For Krivda, another thing also begins to appear in the 1960s: grants. He tells me:

You know, there weren't always grants. Now, there are grants. People can get a grant to do this and a grant to do that. You're getting grants to put on jazz concerts. The Northeast Ohio Jazz Society starts. It was either the very late 70s or the 80s. What they were, they were formed...they wanted to put on jazz concerts...they wanted to bring in, on a fairly regular basis, jazz artists from around the world. But they were basically a grant-getting organization. They had guys who knew how to do that. They had Willard Jenkins, who's currently the artistic director of the Tri-C Jazz Fest. The Tri-C Jazz Fest started in the 1980s. The scholastic jazz movement was burgeoning in the 1980s, so the 1980s were...a lot of things that happened then are still operative.

Through this process of the creation of festivals, jazz is "marketed as a concert. It's marketed as a specific destination...a specific thing, a specific event, as opposed to a general hang." Previously, jazz had been "part of a hang." In those days, jazz "was really part of the street, the neighborhood. We used to go club to club, up and down the street."

Krivda told me that jazz was always oriented toward creating a physical response in the audience: "The rhythm of the music is there to create that kind of response. It was supposed to. It was dance music. That was just fundamental." He points to a history of jazz when "There are dance halls everywhere, so everything kind of flowed out of that." With bebop, he responds to the idea that they "didn't want to have any dancing going on" by stating: "the musicians were dancing: it was about that." He quotes Art Blakey as stating: "I look at the audience. If I don't see them do this or tapping their foot, I know we're doing something wrong." From Krivda's perspective on jazz history, "the physical good time, physically responsive audience was always a big deal."

Sometimes, this sensibility was more implicit than explicit: "Even if there wasn't a thought about...it was a reflex. Of course you gotta be swinging. For example, even the

organ trios that were playing down here...weren't playing for dancing, so to speak, everyone was grooving like crazy." In contrast, "That's one of the things that changed with the new thing, the avant garde movement." From this perspective, black avant-gardism of the late 60s and jazz scholasticism of the 1980s share hostility to physical response and the groove.

Along with several other white jazz musicians, Ernie Krivda was born in the suburb of Garfield Heights. He explains Garfield Heights:

Garfield Heights is a starter community...People wanted to own homes. And this was a cheap way of getting started. And so you have the influx of working class people after the War, especially during the 1950s, a mixture of Polish, Italian, mostly and strong ethnic components.

At Garfield high school, a man named Vince Patty "was a tremendous musical force." Krivda describes Patty as "a very gifted musician himself and he's a great teacher. He gets people involved in things. He starts teaching at Garfield Heights in the late 50s." Shortly thereafter, "there are people playing jazz...principally, there was a great saxophonist, one of the greatest saxophonists I've ever heard in my life—you don't know who he is. His name is Dave O'Rourke. Dave is kind of the embodiment of the jazz influence. Even though Vince leaves to come here to Cleveland Heights and start the shit up over here."

Garfield Heights had a jazz band. And jazz provided students with

a certain worldliness, hipness level that they could be part of...the *Playboy* Magazine thing...they could smoke a pipe and try to impress the chicks that way...jazz was finding a place, not just among musicians, although certainly among musicians, but also among young people...so there was a kind of support for this kind of thing going on.

Krivda states: “I didn’t get into jazz because of Garfield Heights, but I lived in Garfield Heights and met a lot of people who were into it. With Val Kent, we used to have this great car. We used to go hang out here all the time” (East 105th and Euclid).

He notes that other musicians came out of Garfield Heights, including Ken Peplowski and Val Kent: “they think Garfield Heights is like a Polka haven and it is. It is. I used to play in Polka bands. I actually started out when I was just out of junior High School.” He notes that there were polka venues in Garfield Heights, but no jazz venues—just jazz musicians. He remembers the saxophonist Dave O’Rourke playing an anomalous jazz gig at a polka venue in Garfield Heights. Polkas suburbanites would commute to urban jazz venues to groove.

Krivda says that he started out in teaching to earn some extra money. Although his career as a jazz instructor often involved a disconnection to community cultural aesthetics that he found at 105th and Euclid, he nevertheless found it rewarding. As he progressed as a teacher, he found that he drew on the “growth energy” of his students. He found that students often had a desire, a “burn to learn something, to get better, to grow, to get their shit together, which they may not even know what that is.” Teaching younger students illuminated Krivda’s own sense of his desire to grow: “There’s this push, this pull, this spirit that makes them...you realize that you need to continue to have that yourself.” This desire to grow becomes more readily available from students than peers: “The desire to keep growing now is connected to the people I’m teaching.” The growth energy “becomes integral to what it is that you do. You go from the altruistic thing...I feel the need. The need now is mine. I need what they have. I need that now. That’s what teaching has become. To keep up with the growth energy, to keep going with it.”

Teaching becomes a way for Krivda to keep growing: “If you want to keep getting better, if you want to grow. Then you need to be around people who want to grow. Lot of musicians lose that in a way for a time or for periods of time. I’m just trying to keep it going.”

Krivda notes that jazz education can be a sterile domain. He states: “the majority of education is so misguided.” For Krivda, the “same thing happened to classical music before.” In both classical and jazz education, music has become scientific. And this is insufficient:

Music is never justified by the nature of the science, its complexity or even the basic fundamentals of playing an instrument. Just because you can play in tune, command the instrument, play a series of complicated chord changes. Any scientific thing. Play in a weird time signature.

Adhering to this vision of complexity impoverishes the music of its key vitality.

Krivda states that things like complexity and technical facility don’t “justify the music that you play.” As proof he avers:

You never hear that mentioned ever. You never hear—Is that what you want to communicate to your audience? That you can play in tune? Is that what’s going to get their fannies in the seat next time? Or the complexity of your lines? They may go...be impressed for a moment. But if something doesn’t hit them that has some relationship to the way they feel about life or the progression of life. The experience of life. Something that doesn’t reach them in their fanny or in their heart. The music is justified there, not in these other things. You’re learning these things to do something, not just to have them.

Krivda finds that this sensibility is largely lost on young musicians. Musicians are “forced simply to demonstrate that” they can play complexly and in tune “because of the system.” He notes that it is possible to get a doctorate without learning the core justifying values of jazz.

You can go through a doctorate and if you can demonstrate these things, you have a doctorate. It doesn’t mean you’ll be able to make anybody happy when you

play. Make anybody feel anything when you play. Have any kind of relevance to anybody's life when you play. But you'll have your degree. If that becomes the essential to demonstrate so that you can get this piece of paper, so that you can go influence other people to do the same thing.

Here the institutional validation of jazz and its genre uplift into universities has often allowed for the stripping of the communal aesthetic vitality that animated the music for him in his formative years. For Krivda, transmission has always been a significant part of jazz. But musicians used to be involved in experiential learning, where audience response mattered more than demonstrations of technical competence.

Jazz has always been taught and learned. It hasn't been taught in a curriculum...It was always taught in situations. The situation was the teacher, the bandleader...were guides. They were guides. You learned how to make music in situations.

Although he notes that technical skills are necessary, "they're necessary for a specific purpose":

And the specific purpose has to be out front. You have to know that at all times. That's what's important. Not, this is to make this happen. Not...that's the goals. Going back to music feeling good. Where does that happen? That happens when you play for people in a situation and...the whether or not you have it together is demonstrated by the reaction of that to what you do.

Legitimate jazz genres—and Krivda has played across genres—have lost their audience.

The academic atmosphere is thus missing the primary purpose of learning to play:

So, that's the problem that I have with jazz education. You have generation after generation of people who have forgotten the purpose. And once again, why would you think that going into an academic atmosphere, a scholastic atmosphere would somehow make learning something better? More convenient. More, I don't know...you know, we're all in this together. Creating a peer group. There's always been a peer group. There's always been a musicians peer group. See, that's the problem.

Instead of performing for audiences,

People display. Musicians display. And they're very good at displaying. They have to do juries, so they become very good at displaying and showing people

what they know, which is not necessarily the greatest performance. What you have is music being forced to appeal. Our audience...regular people couldn't give a shit. They've gone away. The only people that remain are music students. So we're crafting our music for twenty year olds who are only interested in the technical, scientific aspects of music, so that we're not touching anybody. That's not true of everybody, but there's like this wave—and it's churning out musicians who do that. That's what they're there to knock out.

Although he is teaching in a college program, he is very proud of what they do because of its allegiance to tradition: “But I'm so proud of this program that we have because we try to go at things from the traditional ways of teaching the music. It's about communication. It's about old times there are not forgotten, in terms of swinging and stuff.” For example, he takes his students to perform at the Barking Spider, a local bar:

The reason the Barking Spider thing exists is that I know for a fact that you can't learn how to play music in a classroom. And specifically, what are we working on. Here we are, how do you know you're getting this stuff? Well, unless you play for somebody. And it can't be the concert at the end of the semester, because that's not enough. You know. You have to. You tweak it along the way. You learn something from this performance. You add to it and you grow from performance to performance. And so I got this monthly gig at the Barking Spider. I think it's worked out great. Some of the students that have come into the program over the last couple years have come in with no prior jazz knowledge. None. Not a little bit. None. And they can actually play. They can actually play. And some of it—at least some of it has to do with the Barking Spider thing. The way they approach it. The way they look forward to it. You know, if it was just going to class and doing it, it would not be the same. They wouldn't have the same—we've got to get this together for this and we've got to make this better for this time over here. One time, different students at different times had different issues. It was one of those things.

He points to a key concern for working jazz musicians:

Nobody's in the joint. Nobody's in the joint. You know, this happens. But you know who is in the joint: the owner is in the joint, who, being by themselves and having nothing to do because nobody's in the joint is now a little bit upset because nobody's in the joint. And they have nothing to do except listen and watch you play. So now they're picking up on everything and looking for problems. Why isn't there anybody here? So, all of a sudden we're getting criticism. Now, I have heard this shit so many times from playing in an empty club and an owner's pissed off... They need to have that. They need to experience that. If they just play this once a semester concert, the only people who are there

are their parents. That's nothing. Or if they just go to class. They're only there by themselves and the only feedback they get is from me and that's not enough. They have to feel the result of what they're doing. You can only get that in live performance in a situation. That's why we do the Barking Spider. It's been great. It's been going on a long time.

Jazzers perform in different situations today. Efforts to make sense of the institutional environment as a cultural realm are recurrently haunted by the past. Jazz is an open-ended idea. Its discontinuous instantiations in different Cleveland spaces still allows for the category to be employed in practice. I'm interested in how the categorical usage of the term, as the editors of *Jazz/Not Jazz* put it, "relates to and resonates with living, breathing human beings" (Ake, Garret, and Goldmark 2012: 7).

Krivda's narrative of jazz scarcity points to ways in which the spatialization of race involves the spatialization of genre. Genre uplift has often meant jazz entry into white spaces. Krivda's narrative begins with the idea that there is a limited amount of space for jazz. Only some jazz can exist. Black spaces are under threat and there is a limited paying audience for jazz. Krivda's narrative takes place within a frame that both hints at the larger structuring inequalities of the city and assumes a genre competition between pleasure and dissonance; communication and mastery, within those constraints. People aren't just drawn to sound; they're drawn to events. Questions of audience appeal and music's democratic potential are always based in part on the infrastructures of support that enable gatherings to occur in the first place. That Krivda pits jazz against itself presents a legible genre problem, even as it is shaped by the huge amorphous problem of institutional resources flowing toward certain kinds of music and the black spatial containment.

Krivda pits the “real jazz” of pleasure and audience response against the incursion of the avant garde on this kind of relational possibility. My contention in this chapter, however, is not to privilege any one genre as more democratic than another, but to note the failures of infrastructures to support the possibilities of different kinds of relational genre agency. It’s a master strategy to set victims against each other and, in Cleveland, the infrastructural politics of white dominance has done just that: Any particular jazz space is scrutinized with a sense that there is not room for all jazz and different kinds of jazz threaten each other.

Authenticity, Anachronism and Race in Cleveland Clubs: The Racial Politics of Messing with the Past in a Still Segregated City

Wynton ... well, he’s a good player...But see, I don’t want to get caught up in some jive feud thing here...What he doin’, messin’ with the past? A player of his caliber should just wise up and realize it’s over. The past is dead. *Jazz is dead!* The whole context has changed and people gotta...Why get caught up in that ‘old’ shit?
—Miles Davis (in Maher and Dorr 2009: 260)

In *The Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy writes about the politics of the conflict between Miles Davis and Wynton Marsalis to reflect on the “effects of racism’s denials not only of black cultural integrity but of the capacity of blacks to bear and reproduce any culture worthy of the name” (Gilroy 1993: 97). While Marsalis held that jazz functions as a fount for black culture, Davis emphasized a continual inventiveness. Marsalis considered the fusion work Davis had done to be inauthentic, while Davis critiqued Marsalis as anachronistic. For Gilroy, this disagreement between the two famous trumpet players is illustrative of the blending within black Atlantic cultures that “continually confounds any simplistic (essentialist or anti-essentialist) understanding of the relationship between

racial identity and racial non-identity, between folk cultural authenticity and pop cultural betrayal” (Gilroy 1993: 99). The racial community shaped through culture signifies a “connectedness and experiential continuity that is everywhere denied by the profane realities of black life amidst the debris of de-industrialization” (Gilroy 1993: 99). The dispute between safe anachronism and inauthentic faddishness plays out in segregated, post-industrial Cleveland. The Marsalis and Davis dispute can be grounded in a local context in which the invisible racial walls of the city become primary players.

THE ACCOMPANIMENT

The Social Life of Canon and the Politics of Legitimizing Jazz

When black and white people involved with jazz musicking in the Cleveland metropolitan area speak about jazz and its boundaries, they are involved in a form of complicated multi-tasking. There are always overt or covert racial meanings present, but they are encoded in a range of ideas about black musical aesthetics, racial stereotypes, cultural hierarchy, material inequality and access. The social meaning of jazz emerges out of people’s interpretations of what elements are in the mix of our mixed legacy of racial progress and regress. Oftentimes, contestations about tradition are coded arguments about race.

Arguments about the jazz canon, as Ken Prouty notes, usually point to blind spots within it-excluded names that should be added in. Rarely is the possibility of dispensing with the canon altogether considered. Beginning in the 1970s, jazz studies started to emerge in academic settings. This phase of legitimating jazz in musical academia shared much in common with classes based in the Western music canon. This effort to assert jazz’s value paralleled classical music, moving through a grand teleological trajectory.

Historians such as Marshall Stearns were important in this legitimization process, asserting jazz as “America’s Classical Music.” Jazz writers have frequently shown discomfort with the canon, even as they create their own alternative canonical structures of mostly male, heroic musicians. The process of legitimating the excluded genre of jazz has proceeded with its own exclusions. Jazz scholarship has frequently found itself saying one thing while doing another. It critiques the canon for its exclusions, while re-inscribing certain kinds of exclusions, hierarchies and omissions in the act of legitimization (Prouty 2010).

Over the course of the 20th century, many people in jazz took on conventions of classical music. Ingrid Monson writes about the politics of aesthetic respectability. Describing the Modern Jazz Quartet (MJQ), she notes that they presented a “precise but conservative jazz whose very elegance and sophistication demanded that white audiences respond to them as the intelligent, dignified men they were” (Monson 2010: 95). In their self-presentation, they brought on a musical “politics of respectability” combining “both a conservative and subversive impulse” (Monson 2010: 96). Their conservative impulse embraced “classical musical standards of excellence” (Monson 2010: 96). They

seemed to prove to an audience beyond the African American community that they too were learned in matters of form, thematic development, fugal writing, and harmony. Their music did not question the universal applicability of these standards but rather demonstrated that they could improvise compellingly within them. (Monson 2010: 95)

Monson reads this conservatism as serving a strategic purpose within a specific context.

At a historical moment when jazz was associated with drug use and moral laxity, “the MJQ confronted white audiences in the United States and Europe with a conservative black masculinity that they seldom realized existed” (Monson 2010: 96). MJQ vibraphonist Milt Jackson states: ‘The idea was to raise the stature of jazz, which had

become...stigmatized just by the name itself and was put down. For me, jazz is on the same level as classical music, which everyone respects in all countries” (Jackson in Monson 2010: 96). It was a way of recuperating jazz from a demeaned status. Monson states that the Modern Jazz Quartet, in particular, framed their music so that it would be suited to classical performance conventions.²⁹ With every note, they “demonstrated that theirs was a music that belonged not in a nightclub but rather in the concert hall” (Monson 2010: 96). A very similar politics of aesthetic respectability and genre uplift is alive in the contestations over the meanings and boundaries of the Cleveland jazz scene.

Jazz is valued in competing ways. For some, it is American art music that transcends context. For others, it is African-American music that is only meaningfully performed within a social context. This raises a constellation of issues in Cleveland’s clubs. Clubs, by their very nature lack the prestige of concert halls, even as they can strive for prestige through presentational choices. Whereas jazz essentialism is used for appealing to the traditionalist orthodoxy of arts funders, the hope for jazz as a music with club appeal for modern black audiences lingers on. Jazz in Cleveland jazz clubs thus finds itself in a knot of both seeking genre uplift and combatting the exclusivity of concert halls.

The Racial Politics of Life After Jazz’s Death: Black Communal Aesthetics, Genre Uplift and the Hauntings of Spatial Apartheid

The Bop Stop opened at East 40th and St. Clair. Bassist, Gary Aprile stated in an interview with Joe Mosbrook in *Cleveland Jazz History*: “This club has all the

²⁹ According to Monson, part of how they did this was by downplaying black aesthetics. In Monson’s formulation they underemphasized “two central components of African American aesthetics” with “the reigning in of the drums and the understated emotional tone of the group” (Monson 2010: 96).

intangibles. It's owned by a musician, it has the right music, the right atmosphere, and the music is the focus" (Aprile in Mosbrook 2003: 136). The owner, Ron Busch compared his club to other famous venues outside Cleveland that were musician-focused: "I felt that by no stretch was I breaking new ground. There had been other clubs—the Village Vanguard...Shelly's Manne Hole... the Black Hawk... that made music the focus" (Busch in Mosbrook 2003: 137). Busch's initial booking policy focused on top-shelf professional musicians. According to Mosbrook, "His policy bothered some other Cleveland jazz musicians" (Mosbrook 2003: 137). For Busch, the club is "not an oasis for all the musicians in town, but it is an oasis for the musicians who have decided that they're going to challenge themselves. There're a lot guys who are not willing to take the chance" (Busch in Mosbrook 2003: 137).

The Bop Stop was a Cleveland club that attempted to transpose conventions associated with high culture into a jazz club context and its management made explicit efforts to function like a concert hall. It presumed the conventions of the concert hall as the pinnacle of jazz. Its politics of aesthetic respectability can be reframed as a politics of concert hall respectability.³⁰ With the concert hall as its aim, the venue proceeded with "genre uplift."

In its original conception, the club aimed to reproduce a golden age of jazz clubs. According to the owner, Ron Busch, the club began as an effort to recreate the jazz club authenticity of an earlier era. Instead, because of audience demands, they adjusted the venue's ambience to one of a considerably higher level of propriety. Busch stated, "We tried to go back in time to create the authenticity of the old club. But then, we found out

³⁰ For a contextualization of proper concert hall behavior with categorical identities in mind, see (Frith: 1996).

stuff had changed. In the '60s people drank, smoked and stayed out late. But, in the '90s, many people are teetotalers. They want a smoke-free environment and they want to be home by midnight" (Busch in Mosbrook 2003: 137).

The resulting club, according to Mark Gridley "became the mecca for serious jazz fans and musicians who need an inexpensive place that is convenient and unpretentious. It is where they can comfortably listen to live jazz without being distracted by the extraneous activities common to most other nightspots. Busch runs the Bop Stop with the heart of a musician and the dedication of a jazz fan" (Gridley in Mosbrook 2003: 137). This comment is an example of genre boundary-work. For Gridley, jazz is a music that doesn't countenance audience noise. It is a genre that exists primarily for listening, not for socializing or dancing. The club sought to uplift jazz beyond those unaware of the gravity of the genre, above the rumpus of the untutored.

In 2003, the Bop Stop changed locations. The owners constructed a new building, "a state-of-the-art jazz listening room" (Mosbrook 2003: 138). They "hired an acoustical engineer to design the stage and a sound system which included a control room. Busch said, "it's a nice clear sound with equipment we control from the sound booth" (Mosbrook 2003: 138). With the new venue, Busch presented a wider array of musicians, including singers, Latin jazz, fusion, Dixieland and some touring jazz artists. Busch stated: "All we have to do now is handle the baby with care and bring in the best music we can" (Mosbrook 2003: 138). A few years later, the Bop Stop shut its doors. The club's closure was a source of much commentary among musicians I encountered.

For several of my informants, the reason Bop Stop didn't succeed is linked to race, but in an unstable way. One black artist, James Richardson, told me the club

neglected black communal aesthetics and was not formatted for a black audience. Noting that in Northeast Ohio, “everybody don’t mesh,” he said:

I think most black people didn’t go to that place...that’s ultimately why it tanked...it was too much restriction on the music...it took away from that element of the audience being just as important as the performers...because we feed off of them...most musicians would say that if the audience is digging, performers play more intensely.

From Richardson’s perspective, The Bop Stop was so restrictive of performer-audience interaction that it failed to draw black patrons.

The owners said: this is an artistic venue and it should get the same respect as walking into Severance Hall. And I think that was too extreme, maybe. Because jazz had always also been a social event. It was never a concert event. That was never the history of it. It just wasn’t. If you’re demanding that...you’re going to kill the vibe. And that’s what happened. They finally closed down. They got bigger and bigger...and I mean, I loved that place. And I wanted that place to succeed. But when you divorce the experience from the people, it becomes a problem. Any art that doesn’t take their audience into consideration, in my opinion, is an art that’s going to die.

Long before The Bop Stop was born, John Lennon famously declared that jazz is dead. Jazz’s life since the rock star proclaimed its death has been fraught with different ways of imagining its past, particularly in a tension between retaining African-American communal aesthetics, while also achieving high cultural prestige. The history of Cleveland jazz points to a more antagonistic relationship between black community spaces and art institutions.

Joe Mosbrook notes that early Cleveland jazz appeared during the 1910s and 1920s in “the area of the city where blacks were settling” (Mosbrook 2003: 10). During these years, polite society frowned on jazz and considered it a threatening form of music. It was constructed at odds with high culture as a distortion of the technique of cultivated classical musicians. Nikolai Sokoloff, the first conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra put

it in a nutshell in a statement he made in 1918: “A player cannot do his most beautiful work if he has misused his talent by playing ragtime” (Sokoloff in Mosbrook 2003: 10). In addition to a discourse about it disfiguring carefully nurtured classical skills, jazz was also expressly prohibited by the orchestra. The following rule in the orchestra member’s contract effectively prohibited the playing of jazz: “No member of the orchestra shall play at a dance or in a parade” (Mosbrook 2003: 10).

The City of Cleveland formulated a series of regulations for dance venues featuring jazz in 1925 framing the music as uncouth: “Vulgar noisy jazz music is prohibited...Such music almost forces dancers to use jerky half-steps and invites immoral behavior” (Mosbrook 2003: 10). Many of these regulations were thus aimed at physical contact and dance: “Male dancers are not permitted to hold their partners tightly; suggestive movements are not permitted... Partners are not permitted to dance with cheeks close or touching. When dancers put their cheeks together, it is simply a case of public love-making” (in Mosbrook 2003: 10). As jazz grew in popularity, however, many of these regulations were enforceable.

There is no clear, univocal history of what happened to Cleveland jazz as an activity that thrived in clubs during the 1950s and early 1960s. In *Cleveland Jazz History* Joe Mosbrook states simply that the genre declined and appeared in a different form because of “the economics of presenting live music” (Mosbrook 120: 2003). This led to the migration of jazz away from informal club and community settings into institutional spaces. Mosbrook notes that four key institutions revitalized and redefined jazz after the lean years of the 1970s: the Northeast Ohio Jazz Society emerged in 1978; the Tri-C jazz fest came into existence in 1980; the Cleveland Jazz Orchestra started in 1984; and public

radio launched a jazz show in 1984. Each element of this regeneration depended as much on grants and institutional finding as on popular interest. It was a revival built around memory and historical reconstruction. This tension between living culture and historical preservation was alive and unwell in the racial politics of the Bop Stop. Whereas jazz is both a feared music of a feared neighborhood and a genre that has found its way into concert halls, the tension between these two histories plays out in The Bop Stop, a neighborhood club that embraces concert hall sensibilities.

An African-American musician named Robert Hall, who moved to Cleveland in his thirties, told me that when he first arrived in town in the 1980s, he discovered the Bop Stop when it was in its original location in downtown Cleveland. He told me:

They had these two clubs...one was called 6th Street Down Under and the other one was called the Bop Stop. The Bop Stop had moved from 40th and Sinclair to East 9th. And they were side by side. 6th Street Down Under was owned by a black establishment...the other one was owned by a white establishment. And I would stand there and watch white patrons go into the Bop Stop and watch black patrons go into [6th Street Down Under]...and I thought to myself...I'm smack dab in the middle of downtown, where everybody uses it. And this is how they use it...the contrast was very stark...it was kind of like a microcosm in what I was dealing with, with the community.

For Hall, the two segregated venues were symbols of the larger segregation in the city.

Moreover, these two venues presented different versions of jazz:

In the black establishment, true to form, African Americans interfacing and interacting with the music because it is our music. It's a communal music. There's call and response...people will talk to the musicians...the musicians will talk to the audience. That's comfort for me. But I would go into the other club...the European style music as art and not as a communal thing...it's like "sh, sh sh sh quiet. This is jazz." I'm seeing all of this within the same block. It kind of made the reality of the city that I'm dealing with...

He then linked the declining interest in jazz on the part of the black community to the reframing of jazz as art music:

Black people don't really care for jazz today...it's more about hip hop and R&B...Black stations don't play jazz. White stations do...because now, all of the sudden jazz is an art music...

According to Hall, it is the fundamental communal aesthetic of jazz that is the prime casualty.

Moreover, he sees white Clevelanders as not properly investing in jazz because they don't value it as part of themselves: "If it's not your child, are you going to take care of it like you would take care of your child? I think not. I think this is what's happening within Cleveland...and all over the country. It's not valued. It's not so European." At the same time, ironically, Hall wanted jazz to be regarded as classical music that has parity with European forms. Hall both found the Bop Stop alienating to black audiences because of its adaption of European concert hall conventions, while remaining a proponent of genre uplift in other ways. He states:

Whereas, on the other hand, you look at European classical music. Jazz is classical music as well. There are great concert halls everywhere. They're subsidized by companies that see themselves in that mirror that reflect a European character. And they take care of that. Thank god for Wynton Marsalis, who not only plays great jazz...he can also do the European thing too...it would take someone...it's kind of like Barack Obama in a sense...who may be African American, but he's also a student of the world and has traveled...if it wasn't for [Marsalis'] persona, Lincoln center wouldn't exist. It would have equal footing with the other arts organizations that have happened, comprised of Lincoln Center. If you really stop and think about it, how many other organizations across the country are built to just proselytize about jazz? There aren't very many. You may have clubs, but nothing to the extent where millions and millions of dollars are being poured in to continue to keep this movement going...and to foster its development and ensure its safety through generations. It's not really happening for jazz. Because that ain't my child. And that's why I feel so committed to remain in this game. It is a game, but it's my heritage.

Thus, at the same time that he critiques "genre uplift" and the "politics of concert hall respectability" for causing diminishing interest among black people for jazz in Cleveland, he also suggests that instantiating jazz within elite institutions is necessary for ensuring

its development and safety. He critiques The Bop Stop for undermining black aesthetics and black audience responses. Incongruously, he strategically promotes jazz as classical music, to allow the music to survive with institutional backing.

When I asked Art Jenkins, another black musician about the short-lived career of the Bop Stop on the West side, he said: “[Ron Busch] built it and literally, nobody came. It’s a shame. The soul is not there. It’s in how he chose to present it, which is similar to what he did in the east side. And it’s a shame. Segregation, the segregation of Cleveland did not permit him to be successful. That’s what I think.” The remark about soul suggests that the owner presented music in a way that was not conducive to pulling in a black audience. The full meaning of how “the segregation of Cleveland” undermined The Bop Stop is more uncertain. Here, segregation is critiqued, but the causal agent is unclear. In one interpretation, Jenkins criticizes the owner for alienating black listeners with his serious jazz presentational style. In another interpretation, Jenkins critiques an agent-less social structuring of segregation.

The reasons why the Bop Stop closed are less interesting to me than people’s interpretation of why this happened. Because there’s no such thing as economics outside of a context shaped by a history of segregation, there is no simple “economic” outside of racial concerns. At the Bop Stop, jazz is adamantly high on the cultural hierarchy, but still shaped by the city’s racial-spatial hierarchy. For many, Busch’s effort at genre uplift was understood not as strategic preservation along the lines of Jazz at Lincoln Center, but as an alienating move against audiences from the black community. The Bop Stop attempted to be a kind of classical music venue and a club, but without the kind of institutional backing Severance Hall received. Here, we see some of the material stakes

of jazz as art materially expressed. The “boring” economics is necessarily inflected by the complexities of institutional sponsorship for classical music and the racial wealth gap. The perceptions people have about race in relationship to the Bop Stop seems to indicate that the venue failed because it fell between two stools: it failed both to achieve institutional sponsorship and to address the right audience.

In her book on the Black Rock Coalition, anthropologist Maureen Mahon engages music journalist Nelson George’s racial categorization of tradition against restless change. For George, “The black audience’s consumerism and restlessness burns out and abandons musical styles, whereas white Americans, in the European tradition of supporting forms and styles for the sake of tradition, seem to hold styles dear long after they have ceased to evolve” (George in Mahon 2004: 239). Mahon finds George’s view to be limited, with its embrace of a “black and white dichotomy that ultimately characterizes efforts like those of the BRC to reclaim rock or of African American jazz trumpet player Wynton Marsalis to preserve and institutionalize jazz as ‘not black’” (Mahon 2004: 239). Though George is accurate in pointing to rapid changes in black music, Mahon critiques him for “demonstrating the common practice of defining what is black in terms of music and behavior through an opposition to what is understood to be white” (Mahon 2004: 239). For George, the authentic black approach is to push forward relentlessly; for Mahon, the racial politics of the past are more complex.

In Cleveland, the politics of traditionalism at the Bop Stop aligned closely with the idea that this approach to music was a “white thing” that alienated participatory black audiences. The Bop Stop thus represents an example of failed genre uplift, a framing of jazz in a club along the lines of concert hall respectability that was understood as

alienating to black audiences. The embedded critique at the policies of the Bop Stop ought to be understood within a context haunted by spatial apartheid. Criticizing the Bop Stop for failing to celebrate black aesthetics is a way of criticizing the structural racism of the city that encloses any effort at genre uplift or financial solvency.

Night Town and the Racial Politics of Audience Noise

I interviewed Night Town's concert booker Jim Wadsworth. We talk about different jazz acts that come to the venue. I notice that it can attract a mixed crowd. He states that he thinks Night Town maintains possibilities for progressive racial politics. It's a subtle thing, he says, but people from different walks of life get together in the venue. Wadsworth is proud of the democratic ambience fostered at the venue: "We have occasions when a millionaire is sitting next to a postman and they're both having a great time together. Where else does that happen?" Regarding the larger landscape of nightclubs, Wadsworth once told Joe Mosbrook of their importance for the vitality and future of jazz as a living form: "The role of the clubs is essential in nurturing talent and providing a workshop for musicians to bring their work along. Some of the most exciting moments in jazz are in the nightclub-type environment" (Wadsworth in Mosbrook 2003: 138).

Night Town opened in 1965 and presented local jazz pianists as well as occasional touring musicians. With a shift in ownership in 1999, Jim Wadsworth was hired as the booker. The venue seats about one hundred people and Wadsworth booked musicians including Ahmad Jamal, McCoy Tyner, and Ray Brown. Wadsworth notes: "The only way to book someone in a smaller venue is to catch them when they are in the

territory and when they need work. You make the best offer you can” (Wadsworth in Mosbrook 2004: 115). It is a club that manages to consistently attract big-name artists. *Downbeat* labeled Night Town one of the best 100 jazz clubs in the world.

The conventions of Night Town are different than those of the Bop Stop. It is a restaurant club in which the sound of people eating provides a base level of background noise. The interaction between the performers and the audience can vary night to night—sometimes a dialogue is established. On other nights the audience will sit quietly and simply listen.

When I spoke to local musicians about Night Town, the reactions were decidedly mixed. One African American fan states: “Night Town is the only place in Cleveland where you’ll be able to hear this music. Kudos to Night Town...I love Jim...if Jim were not here...I probably would not be living in Cleveland...he keeps the scene alive.” But another local black regular suggests that Night Town’s black performers are only tolerated because whiteness retains a hegemonic hold on the venue: “they don’t mind having Forecast in there. They know the influx of other races that come in there is not going to outnumber and outweigh them.” This fan, along with several other musicians I spoke with, considers Night Town to be a white venue because of its owners, even though its roster of acts tends to be very diverse. Henry Huggins, a young black musician I spoke to had a critical perspective on Night Town. He regards the venue as prohibitively expensive: “that place is not made for a predominantly black audience. That place caters to people with money. In Cleveland, that’s not black folks...” Here, class and race are linked: Night Town is a white venue because white people in Cleveland have money and black people do not.

Rich folks, they just make noise, they don't want to listen, they just want to show they have a bunch of fucking money...I know some musicians who won't play there...I don't even know how that place is still running...I guess people dropping 500 dollars because they can.

Here, this musician understands white attendance in these clubs as a status symbol disconnected from interest in the music. It also suggests a form of white moneyed audience behavior that can become overly boisterous and offensive to the musicians, a stark contrast with the silent rule imposed on audiences at venues like the Bop Stop. Different behaviors are similarly raced and classed. At the Bop Stop, moneyed white people insist on no noise. At Night Town, they "just make noise." Being quiet or being loud can both be indicators of moneyed whiteness. This corresponds with anthropologist John Jackson's argument.

Class differences and their articulation with practices and particular actions can be thought of in any number of divergent ways-especially if there aren't necessarily any 'natural' ways of acting to being with, no pre-discursive linkages between specific social classes and everyday behaviors. (Jackson 2001: 148)

These are "folk arguments used to link everyday behaviors to class-specific social differences. Folk definitions of class describe it as a composite of performances, as combinations of behaviors that are all implicated simultaneously in the designation of socio-economic position" (Jackson 2001: 157). Somewhat arbitrary social behaviors are read as rac(ed) and "class(ed) actions" (Jackson 2001: 158).

Take 5 and Opus

Take 5 is black-owned club in downtown Cleveland. One of the co-owners, Bryan Gresham says that his club attracts a predominantly black clientele. Alongside his partner Claude Carson, Gresham approached Take 5 as an opportunity to fill "a void downtown."

During the first half of my fieldwork, another club owned by the duo called Opus was open in Shaker Heights.

Bryan Gresham is 46, African American, born and raised in Cleveland. He describes his clientele as connected to “a spot they had downtown called 6th Street Down-Under.” He states: “Cleveland’s kind of funny because East doesn’t meet West and West doesn’t meet East. So, West side people really don’t come East. Some of them go towards downtown.” I asked him about his current clientele: “mostly the East side. Some folks who happen to be in the downtown area. We really haven’t made...we really should be making inroads with people who live downtown in the Warehouse district. Umm, and that surrounding area...that West 25th to Tremont area. For whatever reason...” he notes, “most of our clientele is predominantly black. That might give a reason why we don’t get as many ethnicities in there that we should get...that’s the history and that’s the story of Cleveland, in and of itself. This is not a commingling town.”

I spoke with Bryan about the racial dynamics of jazz clubs in the city. As we talked, he implied that racial boundaries were often bypassed when the jazz group was really good. “Good” could mean two things. One, the musicians displayed technical aptitude, or, musicians cohered well as a group, through rigorous rehearsing. These beliefs came out as I talked about an experience of watching a white group perform for a black audience in one of his restaurants.

GB: I went to Opus one time and saw the North Coast jazz collective there.

BG: one of my favorite groups

GB: they’re great. I thought that was sort of funny though because that was sort of the inverse of what happens at a lot of jazz things, where you get a black artist for a white audience. At Opus, that was a white artist for a black crowd.

We discussed the dynamic of race. Bryan maintained both that Cleveland was a highly-

segregated city and that technical achievement and group coherence would prompt audiences to bypass race categories.

It's like Miles and all them said: if you can play, you can play. If you can't play, you can't play...and what you mentioned earlier, that's a very tight group. You can tell that those guys play together. See, for me, I don't too much sugarcoat. This town is what it is: it's a very very very prejudiced city. What I was telling you about white don't meet...west don't meet east, east don't meet west.

For Bryan, good white musicians can perform in a black club. White clientele, however, only enter black social spaces for the music. Race and music become linked as a singular form of malleability.

The white clientele I get...when we had Opus, which we don't have any longer, or Take 5. They're really seriously into music. We don't get a transient white clientele that come in there.

I told him that I'd observed black performers performing for white crowds more than white performers for black crowds. He responded:

What you said speaks volumes. Maybe one day we can address it in this city, I don't know it coming anytime soon. As long as white folks feel comfortable. And I mean by that: if it's Bar Louie, Barley house...say they were doing entertainment or any of the other joints around us. Even Night Town...but you'd be surprised like... we have Maria Jacobs. She was our opening act for our grand opening. Trust me, it ain't us.

For Bryan, he makes a good faith effort to include white performers in his clubs, but he can't attract a white following.

When I interviewed Bryan, we spoke about the audience constraints he experienced at his club. He interpreted the lack of white audience members as connected to a lack of interest on the part of whites toward frequenting black establishments:

When white folks talk in that building and around that area: they say "that black jazz club over there." They don't say: "it's a jazz club over there." The only ones that do, they're not from here because they don't know...the ones that frequent the warehouse district, they say: "that black jazz club."

What's particularly notable about Bryan's comments is a distinction between black music and black clubs. Black music can be played in a non-black club:

You take my building, it's probably...ninety-five per cent white and them folks walk down, look through the window and see that it's a predominantly black audience in there, black folks in there. And they walk on by. And it's not deemed...Take 5 is not deemed a jazz club...it's not deemed a rhythm and blues club, it's not deemed a blues club, it's not deemed a music and live entertainment club, it's not even deemed a restaurant. It's deemed all of that, but it's black put before it...

Jazz, R&B and blues are all commonly understood as black music. However, in this circumstance a "black club" is not a place whites want to go to hear black music. If the club were not modified by that adjective, the club would have a broader appeal. In this context, "black" signifies a place where white people don't go, even as "black music" is a music that white people listen to.

He references his father and explains how explicit racial exclusion in public venues "wasn't that long ago." He explains that the horse racing track, the Thistledown Racino—where the smooth jazz group Hubb's Groove often plays in a suburb of Cleveland—has a recent history of racial exclusion:

I know you probably shouldn't harp on this, but you should be mindful of it too. The Racino. You know and Hubb and them play over there all the time and a lot of other artists. My father couldn't walk up in the paddock [the name of the dining area]—it was Thistledown at the time—and get a hamburger and some fries. He had to get it through the back door. It's not so long ago that we were there.

He sees the present as shaped by this recent past and presents a challenge:

The only thing that I challenge folks in this city will do. I know what black folks in this city will do. They'll bust the door down to Bar Louie. They'll bust the door down to these other white establishments. But it's not reciprocated on the other end.

As an entrepreneur, he sees it as his responsibility to attract a racially diverse audience.

He connects this, in particular, to black artists honing their craft to the point where it's

polished enough to reach beyond a monochromatic crowd:

As a black restaurant owner, it's not white folk's job...for me to get them into my spot. I need to do that, so that's why...I was going to the artists...if y'all were to hone and bring that together, you wouldn't have to worry just about black dollars, Y'all would get all dollars. Then TV 8 would come, 3 would come, 5 would come. because we would be crowding and packing...and then all folks would have to come...

Still, Bryan remains skeptical in the face of claims about declining racism within the city.

The explicit racial violence of Little Italy³¹ finds an echo in contemporary, less dramatic, experiences of racial discrimination:

If you look at this area, it wasn't too many years ago where you couldn't even drive through little Italy...and still today, if you go to some of them restaurants, they have incidents where they'll tell you it's booked up and there's nobody sitting in there. So, I mean hey, it is what it is in this city.

“It is what it is” is a great expression. I heard it many times over the course of my fieldwork. It points to the unvarnished inequality and tension that persists in the city. To the extent that Bryan makes categorical assessments of white people, those assessments are linked to his experience over decades of persistent group segregation. Bryan's racial readings are contingent. He's comfortable hiring a white group to perform in his predominantly black club, but he's clear about the prejudice of the city at large.

Segregation, as conceived here, overpowers us. It is above what people can control.

Gresham is neither a staunch traditionalist, nor a staunch innovator—he's interested in finding financial solvency for his jazz club in a segregated city. His aesthetic priorities depend on a conjunction between audience appeal and a politics of valuing of quality that shades quickly into a politics of genre uplift. In his position as club owner, Gresham suggests that good music, broadly defined, would translate into good

³¹ Todd Michney notes that Little Italy long used violence to prevent residential transition. Although some people are making efforts to change the reputation of the neighborhood for racial intolerance, it is still considered a place of threat for many black Cleveland residents (Michney 2006).

revenues—technical achievement and group coherence lead to financial solvency, except for the way racial discrimination undermines his business.

Conclusion:

Excessive nuance to genre detail can itself be unproductive, particularly when it comes to understanding how people make substitutions between racial, cultural and musical categories. The politics of interracial venue segregation clouds the politics of intraracial genre segregation. Greg Tate writes about a history of “a unified black community that didn’t require the worlds of black jazz and black pop to play by the rules of intracultural segregation that prevail today” (Tate 2013: 219). The definitional politics of genre are haunted by spatial apartheid, blurring questions of intracultural genre segregation with racial segregation. This is frequently framed as a tension between uplifting jazz on the cultural hierarchy and the symbiosis of audience friendly popular appeal.

Popular music scholar Fabian Holt is correct when he writes that the “diversification of jazz in the mid twentieth century into cultures of traditional, modern, pop, and art jazz makes it difficult to represent the genre in the singular and increases the need to specify which culture of jazz one refers to” (Holt 2007: 81). Nevertheless, all of these genres are haunted by constricting historical shadows. Jazz is still mixed up in time and hierarchy; the jazz spaces of Cleveland don’t present a progressive, linear relationship to time. Cleveland jazz does not exist in triumphalist time, crowned by the high culture achievement of jazz traditionalism at Lincoln Center. Instead, jazz continues

to be riven by a tension between genre uplift and popular appeal, furtively framed and shaped by urban apartheid.

Jazz, across subgenres, is haunted by racist stereotypes. It is a form of creativity troubled by what Paul Gilroy calls “the pernicious metaphysical dualism that identifies blacks with the body and whites with the mind” (Gilroy 1993: 97). One symptom of this has been a politics of respectability within the genre that seeks to undermine racial stereotypes. David Ake, notes the language of jazz respectability is employed to counter “long-standing, oftentimes, racist, perceptions of jazz as the refuge for antisocial, narcotic-addicted, untrained ‘naturals’” (Ake 2010: 57). This language is part of what I call “genre uplift” and it’s built around “jazz essentialism,” a vision of jazz as serious music for *listening* in the European high culture model. This politics is a contemporary genre manifestation of racial uplift, in a contradictory musical sphere. Historian Kevin Gaines, in his book *Uplifting the Race*, identified racial uplift as part of black elite politics more than a century ago:

Amidst legal and extralegal repression, many black elites sought status, moral authority, and recognition of their humanity by distinguishing themselves, as bourgeois agents of civilization, from the presumably undeveloped black majority; hence the phrase, so purposeful and earnest, yet so often of ambiguous significance, “uplifting the race.” (Gaines 1996: 2)

Genre uplift through jazz essentialism, a musical politics of respectability, can recreate an appeal to some norm of civilization or whiteness, even as jazz cultural practices of performer audience interaction stubbornly resist simple assimilation to the European classical music frame.

The underlying problem is that jazz genre uplift sustains black difference, even as jazz essentialism is a commonsense strategy for legitimating the genre. Consequently, the

genres of jazz in Cleveland seem to be constantly on the defensive, wound up in intractable knots. Jazz genres try to be free from histories of primitivism and also from charges of elitism; from not being taken seriously enough and from being taken too seriously. When jazz musicians combat the hegemonic frame of the stereotyped other, they tend to do so through a respectability politics that creates another set of problems: exclusivity and alienating audiences. David Ake notes that the official language for jazz “sets itself apart as the exclusive province of the urbane and erudite” (Ake 2010: 58).

In Cleveland, the false choice between racist stereotypes and an exclusive politics of respectability fundamentally shape the contestation over genre. This is the haunting of spatial apartheid at play. Many musicians point to a third option: the black communal experience of audience-performer interaction as a form of black jazz difference that isn't subject to the stereotypes haunting blackness.

As a firm marker for black difference that resists the racist enclosure of white fantasy and the politics of concert hall respectability, black communal musicking is a recurring trope in local interpretations of jazz decline and jazz solvency. Lack of black communal musicking is recurrently referred to a casualty of jazz decline. This is where local interpreters conflate and mix economics, audience-performer interaction, and race. Within the constricted discourse about jazz, black communal musicking comes to be used to critique the structural racism of the city through the cultural politics of tradition—and the micropolitics of performer-audience interaction. The economics of structural whiteness are critiqued through a lament for the lost micro-politics of communal musicking. In a way, this is an attribution error: it is quite unlikely that jazz declined simply because jazz musicians stopped engaging communally with audiences in live

performance. A broader genre and economic frame would be required to explicate jazz decline. Instead, the consistent return to the loss of black communal aesthetics in jazz performance stands in for a larger critique of urban inequality. It is an attribution error that tells a greater truth about the constrictions faced by black Cleveland

Duke Ellington is critical of the “category intolerance” he finds in jazz and jazz history. For Ellington:

Jazz continues the pattern of barrier breaking and emerges as the freest musical expression we have yet seen. To me, then, jazz means simply freedom of musical speech! And it is precisely because of this freedom that many varied forms of jazz exist. The important thing to remember, however, is that not one of these forms represents jazz by itself. Jazz means simply the freedom to have many forms. (Ellington in Szwed 2013: 58)

In Cleveland, a city where racism takes place, the contestation over genre and jazz respectability is fundamentally shaped by the haunting of spatial apartheid. Segregated space—and its corresponding inequitable geography of opportunity—is part of the lens through which people understand the definitional politics of genre in the city.

Transcendent art that transcends race goes together with the language of jazz respectability. Jazz becomes a science, not a form of communication. This language is useful for achieving respect and institutional support, yet it is haunted by racial exclusion in shadow form. Visions of aesthetic “realness” and “real jazz” play out in a context in which the terrain is shaped by black spatial containment. The rigid genre polarizations in Cleveland are frozen in place because of a foundation of material constraint. Thus, perceptions of jazz subgenre, place and race are conflated in local perceptions. Here, jazz essentialisms are organized in a space in which the politics of black displacement is relevant, but offstage.

CHAPTER 4

Smooth Jazz's Community Based in the Airwaves and the Live Groove: Black Retro-subjectivity, Audience Appeal, Cultural Memory and the Redeeming Possibilities of Groove-Based Consonance

Is jazz “popular music”? Is some of it “popular music” and some not? Will some of the participants assume that jazz is “popular music” and others assume that it is not?
—Charles Hamm (Hamm 1995: 117)

In the previous chapter, I attended to the ways in which genre uplift and strategic jazz essentialism are mobilized across racial registers in segregated Cleveland. In this chapter, I analyze the social life of the categorical opposition of smooth jazz and straight-ahead jazz. The lived realities of these categories are more complex than genre labels suggest. Smooth jazz eludes easy definition, partly because it is frequently defined as everything “other” to the jazz of modernist mastery; it is defined by what it’s not. Thus, it’s an uneven genre, connoting incomplete, contradictory connections to race, media, audience and musicianship. Cleveland jazz musicians hold a range of attitudes regarding the aesthetics and the skill demanded of smooth jazz. Defenders suggest the difficulty and rigor required in being soft and playing to an audience; the emphasis on groove and feel is championed for representing a subtle relational sensibility. Smooth jazz is also the music of “the people,” and it connects to the sensibilities of contemporary gospel music. Detractors denigrate the genre as unskillful and crassly commercial. Competing notions of authenticity animate tensions within the genre discourse. One version, derivative of nineteenth-century Romantic music, holds that authenticity is defined as being free from commercial interests. Conversely, smooth jazz is considered authentic in its distance from academic spaces and its popular appeal to black audiences.

My interest in this chapter is to begin a response to the question “What would you put in the place of aestheticism?” Clyde Taylor has answered this question in one way, writing: “Everything. Minus aestheticism, the world of human culture can subside back into its mottled, indeterminate multiplicity” (Taylor 2008: 153). Similarly, ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino writes that music “is not a unitary art form,” but a term that “refers to fundamentally distinct types of activities that fulfill different needs and ways of being human” (Turino 2008: 1). For Turino, music is a “powerful human resource” and “can be a special kind of communication and experience that draw upon and draw out different parts of the self” (Ibid.). His emphasis on music “as social life” underscores his point that music “is socially meaningful” (Ibid.). Smooth jazz in Cleveland is subject to debate among Cleveland musicians. It’s haunted by aestheticism, even as it offers a relational community activity that is rooted in black popular culture.

Smooth Jazz’s Retro-Subjectivity

Smooth jazz in Cleveland articulates a retro-subjectivity³² that engages the cultural memory of black popular music. It is a live, improvised music that produces a public intimacy, rooted at once in the newness of the groove, the history of radio waves, and the cultural memory of black community spaces, including clubs and churches. Live smooth jazz in Cleveland immerses the collective into a shared, present, affective community, while also referencing an array of musical codes harkening back to the dynamic history of R&B, jazz and other black popular styles. These sonic codes are recognizable to a black community of listeners, even as they move across boundaries. Thus, smooth jazz combines the communal relationality of live, improvised performance

³² See (McClary 2000) for a discussion of retro-subjectivity in another context.

with a foundation in black popular memory, from Bill Withers to John Legend. The ephemerality and planned obsolescence of commercial culture is transmuted into a collective affective experience of black cultural memory.

Attitudes toward Smooth Jazz and “Real Jazz” in the Cleveland Scene

Musicologist Guthrie Ramsey asserts that ethnic identity and musical practice “glean important traces of meaning from the dialogue occurring between the present and the past” (Ramsey 2003: 38). Moreover, both musical codes and ethnic markers are unstable: “What they mean depends on many contingencies, such as historical context, geographic location, who is uttering them, and who is interpreting them” (Ramsey 2008: 38). This trajectory of thinking prepares the ground for considerations of smooth jazz. Ethnomusicologist Christopher Washburne notes that “members of the jazz community strategically distance themselves from [smooth jazz] artists ... by way of derision and dismissal” (Washburne 2004: 136). He locates jazz scorn for smooth jazz as rooted in the fragile economy available to working jazz musicians. In what is perceived as a zero-sum game, smooth jazz is buttressed by marketing forces that other types of jazz don’t have.

With commercial resources dwindling for non-smooth jazz styles, a protectionist stance is taken by those who are currently funded. A rise in the popular appeal of smooth jazz raises a threat to the fragile jazz economy, creating even a greater need for the jazz community to distance themselves from smooth jazz styles. (Washburne 2004: 139)

In the Cleveland scene, this protectionism in the face of smooth jazz is evident. The binary trap of art vs. commerce haunts the scene. In this trap, “real art,” “real jazz” and “real blackness” tenuously hold on to one side, opposing commerce, smooth jazz and racial inauthenticity on the other. The binary constellation is tenuous, however, because

of center-periphery inversions: “the real art,” “real jazz” and “real blackness” taught in institutional spaces tend to be rooted in white suburbia. Smooth jazz, however, is celebrated in black urban spaces—a key authenticating site in discourses of jazz authenticity. Because inner-city jazz clubs are on the outer periphery of jazz institutions, a variety of attitudes toward smooth jazz and “real jazz” persist among Cleveland jazz musicians. These attitudes range from forthright opposition to the genre in the name of realness; ambivalence; pro-smooth jazz; or the inclusion of smooth jazz within a universalist embrace of all genres.

Opposed to Smooth Jazz, with a Hint of Ambivalence

The most common opposition to smooth jazz comes from musicians who hold a jazz conservatory education. These musicians tend to be white, even as they also identify themselves as inheritors of black culture and advocates for black art. They went to study “real jazz” in a conservatory from accomplished black musicians. Their genre position generally duplicates the highbrow canonical ideals held by Wynton Marsalis. As musicologist Justin Williams notes, “Marsalis championed the great composers of acoustic jazz while dismissing any nonacoustic endeavor as a debased derivative of a pure art form” (Williams 2010: 440). These musicians often respect a range of acoustic styles and performers, including the early jazz of Louis Armstrong and the modernist innovations of Charlie Parker. They locate this mixture in close proximity to the high art of classical music, bringing along its exclusive, elitist connotations. Williams describes this as the “jazz art ideology,” while I refer to it as “jazz essentialism” and, in the context of particular negotiations of genre respect in everyday life, “genre uplift.” Nevertheless,

some purists who hold jazz as serious art, not entertainment, retain a hint of ambivalence toward smooth jazz.

For example, Andrew Smith, a white musician and conservatory graduate who vigilantly distinguishes the music he plays from smooth jazz, is openly hostile toward smooth jazz. At one point, however, he told me that he was beginning to frame the genre more sympathetically, as a question of listening:

I kind of have come to realize that not all people hear music the same ... I usually just assume about everybody that they could tell the difference. Maybe I shouldn't be so mean to the smooth jazz people. I just wish they didn't call it "smooth jazz." Maybe they just don't have the capacity to hear beyond something that's sort of flat-line.

Smooth jazz, for Smith, is regrettable because everything in it is created within an aesthetic range that is much narrower than "real jazz." Consequently, its appellation is offensive: "I don't like that it's masquerading as jazz at all. I think that it's an abomination." In locating smooth jazz, he describes it as muddling the public perception of real jazz: "And I just wish they wouldn't call it jazz ... That's what the public perception of jazz [is] ... Besides the Frank Sinatra people, then you have the smoothies." Although he notes the genre's connections to gospel and jazz, his argument relies on the view that commercial forces pressure the music into a formulaic, artificial mold: "What it doesn't have is any soul. It's not organically developed. So that's part of the problem. It's very cookie-cutter in the same way that pop music is." To illustrate this point, he critiqued the melismas of smooth jazz as resembling those found on popular music shows.

Smooth jazz saxophonists, to Smith, are like singers on *The Voice* or *American Idol* who are "very melismatic for one syllable." The melismas of the saxophone player

reflect the formulaic melismas of the popular singer: “How many blues notes can I put on this one syllable? ... People come to expect that.” The melisma is a performance practice connected to gospel music that can serve as a cue for the invocations of the sacred within popular music. The melisma is a “characteristic element in both African American gospel and secular American popular music” (Meizel 2011: 63). In *American Idol*, it “becomes a vocal, and thus embodied symbol of Blackness” (Ibid). For Andrew Smith, however, the saxophone’s emulation of the vocal line becomes a hackneyed phrase that is part of artificial commercial culture. He describes gospel melismas as a valid form of vocal expression:

When you have a really good gospel singer, there’s some really good melismatic stuff going on. It has developed a bit differently because it’s in reaction to what’s going on ... I’m not minding those melismatic things because it’s coming from the heart. It comes from: *I want you to feel this, or I feel this.*

In contrast, he situates smooth jazz musicians as trafficking primarily in clichés, even as he tries to acknowledge the emotional validity of their experience:

I’m not saying that people who play smooth jazz don’t feel stuff. It’s just transmitted differently ... If I were in sixth grade and I had to make a diorama of smooth jazz and real jazz, there would be a drawing of a melisma, the growling saxophone as opposed...

These clichés of ostentatious feeling might be experientially valid for the performers, but they fall into a stale musical form: “In smooth jazz, it’s almost like it’s an expected little plateau. If you painted it, you wouldn’t have dimension. It’s flat.” “Real jazz,” then, flourishes according to a non-clichéd logic. Whenever he finds himself referencing the licks of great jazz masters, Smith backs away and tries to find ways to keep things fresh. Unlike smooth jazz, he sees the aesthetic range of “real jazz” as intricate, complex and continuously innovative.

It's worth noting that although Smith is the product of a jazz conservatory education and generally a proponent of jazz as high culture, he evaluates smooth jazz using a framework that is not limited to modernist complexity. Instead, he evaluates smooth jazz based on elusive qualities such as "soul" and "feeling," which he finds lacking. In this way, Smith finds smooth jazz as lacking on its own terms.

Ambivalence toward Smooth Jazz: Jazz Is Dead, and the Incongruous Sense That Only White People Support "Real Jazz"

Another group of people in the Cleveland jazz scene held smooth jazz in a contradictory light. On the one hand, they were frustrated with the genre for not living up to "real jazz" in one way or another. On the other hand, they respected smooth jazz musicians, sometimes warily, for their ability to connect to an audience. Additionally, they tended to recognize smooth jazz as connected to "real jazz" and as better than no jazz at all.

Debates about "real jazz" have a long history among jazz aficionados. Jazz scholar Ken Prouty notes that the "boundaries of jazz have long been discussed and debated in the pages of magazines, newspapers, and journals, and in films and other media, as critics, scholars, and musicians have expressed opinions on what qualifies as 'real jazz'" (Prouty in Ake, Garrett and Goldmark 2012: 70). Geography, as the editors of *Jazz/Not Jazz* note, is a "significant factor that has helped to define 'real' jazz from what some aficionados see as inauthentic practices" (Ake, Garrett and Goldmark 2012: 6). As an ethnographer, my interest is not in outlining the definitive boundaries of "real jazz." Instead, I'm interested in the social life of "real jazz" as it is mobilized by individuals and

institutions in contextualized projects of social power and boundary work. Smooth jazz in Cleveland is geographically from “the streets” (and the churches) in a way that straight-ahead jazz is not; still, the genre serves as a symbol of inauthenticity.

Discourses about jazz are inflected by race in Cleveland. Many of the people I spoke to suggested that black people had generally lost interest in jazz. The overrepresentation of white people in the audience of “real jazz” shows that the genre has functioned as a metric of jazz’s deadness. For example, one middle-class African American resident of Cleveland Heights told me:

Real jazz, it’s probably pretty dead. But it’s on its last legs where people can understand it and listen to it ... It’s sad. I was at the Hanna,³³ where Sean Jones did a tribute to Miles Davis.³⁴ The majority of the audience was white. Which was, you know...

This fan favors “real jazz” over smooth jazz, even though he also claims to support an expansive definition of jazz in which the categories between the real and the smooth are fluid. Here, it’s not possible to say what is within jazz and what is outside of it; covers of R&B songs count as jazz: “You have these covers that they do ... like, jazz to, like, Luther Vandross songs or whatever have you ... That’s still jazz.” In one moment of the interview, Sean Jones performing Miles Davis is real, while in the next moment improvising Luther Vandross songs is jazz. If smooth jazz isn’t quite real, it also isn’t quite fake.

Paul Hall’s Ambivalence: It Pays the Bills, but It’s Not “Real Jazz”

When I sat down with African American jazz pianist, smooth jazz keyboardist

³³ The Hanna Theatre is part of Cleveland’s theater district, Playhouse Square.

³⁴ Sean Jones is a well-respected trumpet player who has made his mark on the local Cleveland scene and has performed in Jazz at Lincoln Center.

and gospel organist Paul Hall, he told me about the many underemployed excellent musicians in Cleveland: “You would be surprised ... at how some of these guys can really play ... and they just work jobs. And I’m sure they wish they could just do music full time, but they can’t.” He relates this to the economic necessity of performing in multiple musical spheres at once: “That’s how hard it is, man. If I was to leave here, if I was to relocate ... I would have to find me a school job, and at the same time, I would go find me a church job on the side.” Growing up in Cleveland, Hall was a well-respected musician across genres. He went on to study at a jazz conservatory and is now a celebrated member of black Cleveland’s musical community across straight-ahead jazz, smooth jazz and gospel.

For Hall, the distinction between smooth jazz and gospel music is almost nonexistent. During our interview, Jones sat down at the piano and played a segment of the Chuck Mangione tune “Feels So Good”³⁵ on the piano. He told me:

I could play that same song, right here on a Sunday morning or even at a more contemporary church, and they think it’s a church song. They think it’s a worship song. You know. I could play that at church right now. There’s no difference.

He distinguishes this music from straight-ahead jazz: “For me personally, I have to have that outlet to play some jazz music. I got to have that. Because I don’t want everything that I learned going to waste ... To play jazz, you really have to know how to do that.” He emphasizes the technical difficulty that is required in straight-ahead jazz that’s not required in contemporary smooth jazz: “At least thirty, forty years ago. You had to know how to do that. You had to have some type of training. Now, you don’t have to have.”

³⁵ This is a well-known smooth jazz tune, with a slow harmonic progression.

Part of his frustration with the Cleveland music scene is the lack of interest audiences have in the technical abilities of artists.

While I was in Cleveland, more than one musician mentioned that most venues demanded performers play smooth jazz; it was very hard to find a venue catering to “real jazz.” For many musicians, the venue Nighttown is the center for “real jazz.” Pianist Paul Hall told me:

That’s the only one that’s really keeping jazz alive, man. That’s the only club, as a matter of fact, that’s keeping what we know to be jazz. The only one that’s keeping it alive. Fortunately, the last corner of people around Cleveland goes there to listen to *real jazz*.

Outside of Nighttown, Hall’s experience performing jazz is as background music. He tells me:

That’s what jazz is, man. When people throw high-end parties ... Of course, they want the jazz music, but they want it like a CD player. We can’t just go in and hammer it down, you know, like we can do at Nighttown. We can’t do it. Barely playing. Making a good amount of money.

This musician’s comments signal the historical interplay between jazz and recording technology. In *Capturing Sound*, musicologist Mark Katz notes that jazz and recording are “so intertwined that it is difficult to conceive of the one without the other” (Katz 2010: 93). On record, jazz could “travel where the musicians did not” (Katz 2010: 93). Here, local musicians follow in the wake of recorded music, performing where the CD player would otherwise be. The musicians must modify their expressive group dynamic in order to cater to the constraints delimited by their employer, someone seeking a live version of a CD at low volume. Hall’s stark comparison to a CD player brings out one take on realness: “real jazz” involves live musicians who can fully explore their

capacities with an audience who is paying attention to them, or at least an audience whom they are not prohibited from disrupting.

Similarly, Hall pointed to a club called Opus that, although it requires concessions to the popular, “welcomes some good straight-ahead stuff.” He noted, however, that playing at this club requires a compromise: straight-ahead performers must mix in some smooth jazz as well. He went to Opus as an audience member to see Cleveland pianist Lafayette Carthon perform:

And for the most part, they was swinging hard in there. Of course, they still played some popular stuff. But for the most part they was in there swinging hard. Like blazing hard. I wish there was some other places like that, where I could go and do that. It’s just not.

Here, “real jazz” is positioned as “straight-ahead” music that swings. It also involves playing “blazing hard.” That is, it allows performers to play at the edge of their ability, in situations where musical concerns could take precedence over providing a pleasant background sound for the dining audience.

Bryan Gresham’s Ambivalence: It Attracts an Audience, but It’s Not Real Jazz

Take 5 is a downtown Cleveland club. I interviewed Bryan Gresham, one of the owners. He told me that jazz is a hard-to-define genre. He describes Take 5 as a club that’s “not 100 percent jazz ... We do all genres of music.” In addition to saying that Take 5 hosts all genres, he mentions: “Forecast, Hubb’s Groove, Skip Gibson ... It’s mostly smooth jazz, unless Sean Jones happens to blow into town—the trumpeter. He does some mainstream or classical-type jazz. Other than that, it’s more fusion based. More pop-instrumental, I like to call it.” This vernacular use of genre titles points to the gray area in defining jazz categories. According to Gresham, there are several smooth

jazz groups that perform at many different venues. Members of these groups often sub for one another. He notes that “Forecast has a core group, but most of them dudes interchange, whether it be New ID, whether it be Hubb’s Groove, whether it be the Hit Squad with Dave Hart, whether it be Kenny Bell and them. All them guys interchange, and they do play all these other places.” For Gresham, this fluidity of personnel points to a larger problem in the groups: they provide lots of supply, but they don’t produce much demand. In this way, they oversaturate the market. Groups—and to a certain extent, shows—are interchangeable. Even if the group has set personnel, some groups play the same repertoire in different venues. Gresham says, “They don’t change the show, which is a downfall for one. Secondly, I’ve talked to a lot of guys. It really hinders and hurts them. And it hurts us also.” Gresham notes:

If Forecast come down there and do the same show, I could see the same show and go to somewhere in the neighborhood where I ain’t gotta pay for parking, I ain’t gotta pay the valet, hear the same show. Why am I going to travel all the way downtown? I tell all these artists: it really hurts them as far as what they can command because ... to me, they don’t have a plan, and as artists, they should all combine and come together ... I don’t say it has to be Take 5, although I think it should be Take 5 because we set a nice venue and a stage that could be very nice in the city of Cleveland. But they need to come together and ... Even my place on Harvard, stop playing those places. First of all, they hurt their market for what they can command as artists and then they hurt us as trying to bring them in.

Gresham is considering moving away from local artists because of poor marketing strategies and musical oversupply:

We’re gravitating now toward doing more ... mainstream artists, rather than doing the local artists. I’ve been preaching to ’em and preaching to ’em. They just don’t get it. You know, if they were to say: “Hey, we’re not going to play but one or two places,” then they could create a market for themselves. But sometimes you got to take a step back to get three steps ahead in the greater picture of what you can do. Once again, they don’t think like that.

In this context, big acts serve as an exciting alternative to the commonplace of local

shows. Gresham's points also outline the intensely local character of Cleveland smooth jazz: the scene is made up of local musicians who sometimes get in each other's way. Although their market is connected to the popular market of smooth jazz radio, it's not the same thing.

When I asked Gresham about the appeal of smooth jazz, he stated:

It's upbeat ... People want to get up and they want to dance and they want to do all sorts of things like that, but it's ... For me, we try to keep it as close as we can ... and then we give them some groups like Chosen Few and then they'll sing some line-dance songs ... People will get up and dance.

Balancing audience demands for music that's upbeat or danceable with the idea of "real jazz" is an ongoing consideration at Take 5: "Everything is bastardized today. It's a shame. You don't just get serious ... Forecast could probably get into some serious jazz, but they just so watered down now." Throughout this interview, Gresham oscillates between the language of the market/strategically limiting access to musical supply and the language of real jazz:

For me to catch Tony Watson and Sean Jones and Kevin Muhammad and them dudes doing they thing and Bill Ransom ... Some serious dudes that can do some *real jazz*. Man, you know, or even like some of the guys ... I've had jam sessions where the cats from Oberlin came in there ... It would be about twelve of them sitting there and they all had cases and they all had they stuff to play.

This "serious" stuff is what matters most to Gresham as a person, even if it has less of a market for Gresham as a businessman.

The Ambivalence of David Gates: Cheesy; Killin'; Too Simple; Too Hard

I spoke with a young black drummer named David Gates who was visiting Cleveland for the summer. He was enrolled in a straight-ahead conservatory jazz program in another city. When I asked him about smooth jazz, he responded: "I feel like it's not

fun to play for nonmusicians. I feel that a lot of people cater to the nonmusician crowd a lot just so they can get gigs. It's kind of taking the fun out of playing music. I feel it's more to get paid instead of doing what you love." The pleasure of performing, for Gates, is of playing for other musicians and jazz connoisseurs who are sufficiently cultivated to appreciate intricate musical performances. Performer pleasure is more important than audience pleasure. He mentioned that he respects the smooth jazz musicians: "All the cats are killin'." However, the "horns sound cheesy to me." They water down their style "just so they can get gigs."

When I asked Gates about the audience, he responded: "I mean, I guess, just people who don't want to hear the complicated notes of jazz ... like, especially the new stuff that's out now. I mean, especially that new stuff, like Robert Glasper. Nobody want to hear that." Though Glasper has a lighter sound, Gates suggests that Glasper presents challenge over groove: "Sometimes it's too much going on for me to listen to him ... I guess people don't want to think that hard. They just want to groove. It is what it is." Gates stated, "I'm tired of it ... If you want to make money in Cleveland, that's what you've got to do." Cleveland's groove-based jazz market provides no space for Gates's concept of sophisticated, challenging musical craft.

When we spoke about individual musicians, he frequently would show his respect for their musicianship and his dismay that they were forced, presumably for financial reasons, into playing smooth jazz. When I mentioned one musician who I had heard playing smooth jazz, he responded: "I've played with him on standards and he's killing on that too." He also stated: "He knows what he has to do to make money around here. Cuz the cats that play hard bop and stuff don't really get called for too much. Like, if it's

a party or something ... the forty-and-over crowd love the smooth jazz.”

For Gates, it “kind of gets old after a while, but it’s easy to groove to.” He also notes the connections to contemporary gospel drumming style: “That’s basically what smooth jazz is. In the African American community, they use the gospel. Most of them are gospel musicians. They just take it out and bring it into that. It sounds great, but most of them play in church.” He also notes: “Most of them cats that play on the road with Usher and them are gospel chops players.” Gates also notes how ill-suited his straight-ahead drumming skill set is for smooth jazz gigs. He said that he likes swinging. He likes “staying in the pocket, but there’s only so much staying in the pocket I like to do.” He notes that when people want him to open up on a solo, they are often expecting the virtuosity and showy pyrotechnics of flashy drummers that have become popular in gospel music. He explains audience responses to triple pedaling and other gospel chops:

People go crazy over that ... The only thing about it is it makes it kind of hard for straight pocket drummers to get gigs. Like, they’re so used to hearing gospel chops over everything. I know when I get called for gigs ... people say: Just open up and play. And I’m like: Yeah, um. Hahaha. I won’t be able to play like that. I’ll give you a groove. I’ll keep the groove. Sometimes even if it doesn’t groove and it has more chops over it, they go with it.

Thus, drumming in smooth jazz requires an expectation of virtuosic gospel drum chops that are outside of Gates’s range. Though he finds the smooth jazz genre as a whole to be compromised by audience demands for groove, he finds that this groove music also requires heavy, over-the-top drum chops.

Gates also does some definitional work when explaining smooth jazz: “I’d say more the funk jazz. Fusion ... Just to clear it up, when I say ‘smooth jazz,’ it’s not like Kenny G smooth jazz, it’s more like funk ... You take R&B. They might play an Usher tune or something and make it jazzy.” Gates’s point underlines one of the key confluences

in the Cleveland scene: smooth jazz is a catch-all category that seems capable of accommodating a wide range of musical material. This formulation includes “funk,” “fusion” and “jazzy R&B.” The third category, however, points to the problem that smooth jazz does include Kenny G. Put a saxophonist where a vocalist would normally go, and jazzy R&B appears. Because Kenny G fits this description, it’s hard to rule him out entirely, particularly because he paid his dues playing for Barry White. Gates probably ruled out Kenny G for a variety of reasons: he’s not local, he’s not black and he’s widely disparaged by straight-ahead jazz musicians. Kenny G, for many, stands in for depthless jazz—marketing gone awry. He’s suspect because he’s popular in the vulgar world of commerce in spite of his distance from the musical rites of the “real jazz” musician. Kenny G does not play groove music for local black audiences in smooth jazz clubs, even if his name is perhaps the one most widely linked to the smooth jazz genre on commercial radio.

Pro-Smooth Jazz: Mark Kelly’s Appreciation of Smooth Jazz and His Explosion of Categories

Mark Kelly is an African American saxophonist who grew up in inner-city Cleveland, living in homeless shelters during parts of his childhood. He went on to study straight-ahead jazz in college, as well as classical music, though he is also connected to the smooth jazz scene. Kelly told me of his respect for smooth jazz musicians. He notes their emphasis on pleasing listeners rather than cultivating individual virtuosity:

A lot of these smooth jazz guys can play the hell out of a melody and connect to an audience. There’s this rub where—the idea is that smooth jazz guys don’t spend as much time in the practice room. Straight-ahead guys need to understand that smooth jazz guys play for the people. They play for the people.

With his choice of the term “practice room,” a particular jazz space constructed in higher

education, this musician implicitly notes the dominant link between straight-ahead jazz and institutionalization. From this angle, it appears that straight-ahead has become a kind of classical music, interested in individual excellence. Smooth jazz, on the other hand, maintains itself as a popular music, interested in pleasing an audience. Kelly, however, went on to explode the binary trap of smooth vs. straight-ahead, suggesting that both categories are constructed in a constricted way.

For Kelly, musicians' "views of what straight-ahead is [are] so skewed ... then you get this idea that it's a listener's music. You can groove there." He states:

Count Basie's not grooving? Not dance music? Ridiculous ... The notion that that's the case among musicians is sad ... The scope of what they listen to is so small in some cases ... They just don't ... You can't be mad at 'em ... I guess I would expect someone that's not a musician to say that.

He describes himself as performing on both sides of the straight-ahead/smooth jazz divide:

It's interesting when you play on both sides of the fence ... It's interesting how people describe my playing ... They say you've got that Kenny Garret,³⁶ straight-ahead thing ... I don't always want to dumb how I'm feeling down ... I think the straight-ahead thing is still grooving, it's just archaic.

He notes that people link smooth jazz to race, but doesn't believe this is totally accurate:

"I bet you if we did a survey, people would say, it's kind of black smooth jazz." Although he recognizes this association, he doesn't think it is clearly linked in this way: "It goes back to the segregation thing ... People hearing a certain kind of music and associating [it] with a culture or a people ... rather than hearing it for what it is. It's music." With his college degree, he says some smooth jazz musicians assume he "wouldn't be able to play with feel."

³⁶ Kenny Garret, not to be confused with Kenny G, is a leading African American saxophonist in the straight-ahead jazz world.

Kelly also notes the divide between aural and literate musicians, a divide that often occurs because of institutional access. He notes, “There are some musicians who can’t read in the area ... but I’d rather have some of them than some of the guys who don’t have ears.” For Kelly, one approach to musicality is not simply better than the other: “I don’t deem them as one or the other ... Those sweeping generalizations about a group of people put us in the situation ... The schools force that down your throat: you better be a reading musician.” In the institutional ideology of college jazz, “having eyes” is privileged over “having ears,” yet strong aural ability is the key component for the horizontal, collective ethos of a band that grooves together and connects with the audience.

Kelly is a champion of the rhetorical effectiveness of smooth jazz, legitimating it in its own terms, even as he can also look down on it as naïve. He notes:

I think that a lot of the smooth jazz musicians ... they do that because ... inner-city Cleveland is a mostly black area ... If you’re playing at Kings and Queens ... the last thing they want to hear is you running the gamut of the last sixty years of jazz ... Those guys, they play to those type of crowds.

He recalls an important learning experience:

I remember one time I did a gig ... I’m sweating, I’m trying to bring Jesus back ... This dude came up and played the melodies, then he played the C major scale and the audience loved it ... I was like: How does that work? But then I was like, you can’t speak to people in calculus if they just know basic math ... You have to tone back what you know.

He also points to some of the ways in which he approaches the smooth jazz scene with some of his theoretical knowledge from institutional training.

I do this thing every once in a while with Skip Gibson ... We do some smooth stuff and straight stuff ... I play some funny stuff, notes that don’t fit on the straight stuff ... When we play the R&B stuff, I give up a sense of what I think it is music needs to be, and playing with the audience ... it’s about making seemingly complicated stuff sound simple.

He also notes that there's a real challenge in simplicity:

A one-chord vamp seems simple, but ... what can I create over this one sound? ... I think of Miles Davis when I think of someone like that ... He didn't necessarily give up integrity as an artist ... but he realized that the general public is not trying to hear something forty years ago ... They're trying to hear something with some hump and backbeat ... Those things go hand in hand ... being an artist and an entertainer.

Kelly will rename a major chord to put on alternations:

Let's say we take a major 7[th] chord ... Sometimes what I do is I rename the chord ... I'm more likely to play notes that do not work in theory with chord ... EMaj7, I might play EMaj#9 and #5.

This approach works well in a straight-ahead setting. But "in R&B, the language is different ... You might put in an extra note, but you don't stay there." Instead, he faces the challenge of playing less than everything he knows: "The simplest things can be the most difficult for jazz musicians ... They think they'll lack integrity if they play the major scale." Kelly points to a statement revered straight-ahead trumpeter Sean Jones once made:

He was talking about playing for people ... It's not really about me. I am exposed and naked in front of everybody and I'm inviting them into this process with me ... I'm trying to invite them into my thing ... bringing people into the musical aspect of that, as opposed to angry, emo jazz.³⁷

The phrase "It's not about you" suggests the valuing of rhetorical effectiveness over self-absorbed jazz. Sometimes, the most compelling performances occur when musicians get out of their own way.

³⁷ "Emo jazz" is a term Kelly used once that was otherwise absent from my interviews. It is, however, a suggestive category in that it positions straight-ahead jazz as self-important and despairing in a way similar to the popular critiques of emo singer-songwriters such as Bright Eyes. "Emo jazz" suggests the public performance of wounded alienation.

Even though Kelly is aware that most urban audiences aren't interested in hearing him play Charlie Parker in "the hood," he hears "the hood" in Charlie Parker. He notes:

The more I progressed as a musician, the more I realized Parker's kind of ghetto ... Because it was the blues ... It was the struggle ... The struggle was *real* when you heard him play ... when you heard his line, that's some deep stuff ... It sounded like the black experience in 1945 and '46. I could hear that ... I was maybe in my twenties by that time ... I'd grown up a little bit.

In this formulation, Charlie Parker's music is not validated in terms of its sophistication or association with art. Instead, it's validated for its connection to the black freedom struggle; Kelly's institutional training outside of Cleveland connected him to an art form that expresses urban black life. He recalls being in his twenties: "We'd spend an extra two hours listening to Parker ... Check this out ... I started hearing it more ... started hearing 'the hood' in it ... the more I hung out." Even though jazz institutions of higher education tend to be predominantly white, he never heard jazz as white:

I never thought of jazz as a white thing ... When I heard Charlie Parker, I thought that was some of the most ghetto thing ever ... It's somewhat sophisticated. All that rhythm ... We do everything in time ... Parker was just that ... a saxophonist who plays drums.

For Kelly, Parker's rhythmic intensity and complexity sonically index urban black life and struggle.

This reading of Parker by Kelly adds a layer of complexity to David Ake's insightful writing about college jazz. Ake notes that critics of college programs "insist that 'real jazz' survives and develops solely on the efforts of its musicians, nightclubs, and record companies, independent of any assistance from ... conservatories, or what one jazz writer described in another context as 'the crutch of subsidy'" (Ake 2012: 256). Ake also points to Gary Kennedy's *Grove* entry, which "presumes that there exists, or existed

in the past, a ‘real jazz’ separate from the evidently pseudo version taught and performed in schools today” (Ake 2012: 243). Still, Ake writes that the mythology of the streets is still alive, even though in reality, very few jazz musicians function outside of institutions these days. Kelly’s perspective suggests that smooth jazz is in the streets, even as the streets are also in the conservatory. His attitude toward jazz is capacious: it encompasses both the street and the institution. He appreciates what he learned in school about the history of black music, and he’s also aware of current taste in contemporary black clubs. In this way, his outlook expands the idea of the street as a static monolith, pointing instead to its complexity and dynamism.

Kelly presents a complex reading of space, race and white musicians who flourish in black culture. Kelly thinks people in suburban areas have constricted ideas of jazz. After recently performing in the suburbs, he makes some dense claims about influence, race and space. He notes that in suburban areas: “Frank Sinatra is jazz ... A very limited sample of what jazz is.” Conversely, black musicians grow up in urban areas with a view of white jazz musicians that conflates their differences from and connection to black culture:

Black people grow up ... They say: Don’t play like Rich Perry cuz that stuff is white ... Don’t play like Joe Lovano cuz that stuff is white ... Joe Lovano is one of the most hood saxophonists ever ... That’s totally a part of Cleveland history.

Here, whiteness is mutable. Lovano’s whiteness is unlike Frank Sinatra’s whiteness, given Lovano’s connection to many other urban Cleveland musicians and styles of playing. Even though he’s white, Joe Lovano represents part of a continuum connected to the history of urban black jazz in the city, as well as the larger “hood” legacy of Charlie Parker.

Kelly is a loyal Clevelander. He knows Cleveland jazz history: “I hold Lovano close to my heart and a lot of guys in the area don’t know ... Tadd Dameron.”³⁸ He supports Joe Lovano’s success: “I think Joe Lovano’s done a great deal of stuff for this community ... He’s reshaping the way people think about Cleveland musicians ... Jerome Jennings, Sean Jones, Curtis Taylor (from Bedford), Philip Jones, Lafayette ... There are all these fantastic musicians that just play with everybody.”³⁹ He also notes the way in which Lovano is part of a larger historical trajectory: “I’ve heard, like, fifteen of Joe Lovano’s records ... just him ... I’ve listened to the evolution of Joe Lovano.” Lovano “sounds like Joe Alexander.” He notes: “Ernie’s the same way ... trying to figure out what he’s doing ... and it led me back to Joe Alexander ... If you don’t know what that is, shame on you, because you’re from Cleveland.” He notes that Joe Lovano is legitimated not because of his skin color, but because of his proximity to tradition:

When you think of the Young Lions⁴⁰ ... most of those guys were on the black side ... all those dudes ... They say Wynton and Roy Hargrove ... There’s this blackness to the idea of the young lion ... I think race kind of plays into it ...but Joe Lovano sounds more in the tradition than any of those dudes ... I’d put my bottom dollar on that ... I know Wynton comes from New Orleans ... When I hear Joe Lovano, I hear years of saxophone players ... He just sounds like the whole history of jazz ... He’s like Neo to me.⁴¹

³⁸ Tadd Dameron was an arranger and pianist from Cleveland who, along with Lennie Tristano, is recognized as one of the early cool jazz pioneers (DeVeaux and Giddins 2009: 312).

³⁹ Jerome Jennings is a Cleveland Heights High School graduate who has been touring with Dee Dee Bridgewater and working at JALC; Sean Jones is a leading light in contemporary jazz, with strong connections to both Cleveland and Pittsburgh; Curtis Taylor is a trumpeter who went through the Tri-C jazz program who has made a splash in the jazz world; Philip Jones emerged from Cleveland Heights High School; Lafayette Carthon is a graduate of Cleveland School of the Arts.

⁴⁰ The Young Lions was a moniker attached to the group of musicians connected with Wynton Marsalis during the early 1980s.

⁴¹ This is a reference to Neo, the Keanu Reeves character with superhuman powers in the movie *The Matrix*.

Beyond Kelly's intense respect for Lovano as part of the Cleveland tradition, he points to the pros and cons of institutional jazz. Institutionalization was both destructive of culture and provided new spaces, he says:

The institutionalization of jazz ... it has done some good things ... It's done some terrible things in other ways ... One of the things that's good ... it gives students a chance to hone their craft ... Back then, it destroyed those little cultural areas where these musicians were hanging here and those musicians were hanging there ... All that spelled disaster for jazz.

Institutional jazz space, for Kelly, bulldozed the particularity of cultural jazz place, even as it opened a space for musicians to cultivate craft in an expansive way. Kelly holds on to the idea of being a complete musician. This idea undercuts any notion of music connecting essentially to only one identity grouping. By definition, a complete musician crosses genres and racial boundaries. It's a category of identity that emerges out of a vision of artistic pliability and resonates more with institutional space than with a clearly bounded cultural place:

It's essential, like a lot of people say—you have to be a complete musician. What does that mean? It doesn't mean just be good at jazz. I would want to be effective across genres ... My scope of musicians spans past jazz ... I did both of my degrees in classical saxophone ... I won't say I'm a genius of classical saxophone, but I can play the styles very well and I can teach it ... The more styles you know, the more likely you are to be able to live as a musician ... The days of genre determining what you do is gone ... You kind of have to be a wiz at everything ... Think about the music of Maria Schneider. She's doing brass band music with backbeats.

Throughout this passage, Kelly positions himself in a complex relationship to jazz history, the demands of the market and the integrity of border-crossing musical mastery. Although he invokes "hood" to legitimate Joe Lovano's playing, Lovano's cosmopolitan reach belies what anthropologist John Jackson calls "any simplistic and static conception of poverty as the apotheosis of honorific social status in black America" (Jackson 2001:

152). In our conversation, Kelly performed across registers of a broadly expansive jazz tradition that was nonetheless distinct from parochial suburban misunderstandings of Frank Sinatra's whiteness as jazz.

Pro-Smooth Jazz: Art Cherry's Straight-Ahead Admiration for "Real" Smooth Jazz and His Understanding of the Genre as Including Racial Subgenres

When I spoke with one African American straight-ahead jazz saxophonist, he presented smooth jazz as having an authenticity of its own, one that he could only imitate. Art Cherry grew up playing in Cleveland jazz clubs and attended college as a classical and jazz musician. Despite this training, he greatly admires smooth jazz musicians and approaches their work with a relativism that betrays no hint of condescension. Cherry states: "It's coming from a rhythm and blues background. It's going to be a little bit more rhythmic ... Rhythm and blues and even rock for that matter." For Cherry, those genres were always already inflected by a jazz feel because the personnel drew from jazz: "All of those guys were jazz musicians, jazz musicians that were filling in the studio ... Motown ... All of those guys were jazz musicians." In Cleveland, smooth jazz is "a little funkier and a little lighter." This scene of funky lightness is predominantly black and upholds a distinct skill set.

Cherry states that straight-ahead requires a skill set with more rigorous technical demands than smooth jazz. Still, smooth jazz has demands of its own, particularly demands of groove and feel, that don't fit smoothly within standard narratives of modernist mastery. In smooth jazz, "there's an aural sort of thing that goes with that ... Unless you work on that, you're not going to have those skills. They're different skill sets ... If you work on a straight-ahead skill set, those are the ones you have ... not

necessarily going to be able to cross over.” It’s something that can be learned through contact with the environment: “It’s all teachable if you’re in the right environment. And the operative word is *environment*. If you’re not around that, you cannot learn it.” He points to idiosyncratic, community-specific demands:

It’s a dialect, really ... Musicians that are, like, in their community, they develop their own dialect. It’s just what we do ... Straight-ahead, they have their dialect. Sad to say, there is some prejudice even among that: this is good. Well, this is good. Now, if you can’t play this, you’re no good. If you can’t play Giant Steps, you suck [for straight-ahead players] ... Hey, if you can’t play Marvin Gaye, you suck [for smooth jazz players]. But they’re two different sort of things ... If you’re not experiencing that, you’re not going to be able to acquire those skills. So, they are teachable, but you have to be able to surround yourselves in that environment.

Although playing instrumental covers of Marvin Gaye may be less technically difficult than playing John Coltrane’s notoriously difficult “Giant Steps” (a tune with a very fast harmonic rhythm based on an unconventional progression), it still demands immersive musical experience.

Cherry is comfortable teaching straight-ahead and “pointing to structural cohesion to what they’re playing ... Isolating ... chords and how they’re going to set it up.” He has a harder time with smooth jazz: “Smooth jazz is more about the groove. Where’s the groove, and it’s not going to have as much chromaticism.” As a straight-ahead player, Cherry talks about the difficulty he has walking into a smooth jazz gig:

If I’m walking in from one gig to the next, it’s easier for me to step into a straight-ahead gig, cuz I’ve done more of that. It’s more difficult for me to step into a smooth jazz thing ... You know, depending on where it is.

He does note that there are different types of smooth jazz gigs. He classifies these gigs according to racial inflection: “If it’s smooth jazz that’s a little more on the white side, it’s a little easier. Because I have the classical experience.” However, he finds black

smooth jazz gigs to be more difficult:

If it's more on the funky side, I have to really hold back and play less because that's the idiom. You know, but to play less. To play fluidly. You have to be involved in that. What I would play would be an affectation of what a true player would play. And I've walked in and played gigs ... Let's play this funk groove. *Aaaayyyy* [sound of not knowing quite what to do] ... I had to lose my bebop-ness to play that.

In the above quote, it's worth pointing to Cherry's use of the word *affectation*: this implies that he doesn't want to play an imitation of smooth jazz. Although smooth jazz is often dismissed as inauthentic jazz, Cherry implies that there are committed practitioners who have mastered the funky, fluid minimalism of the genre. Authentic smooth jazz, for Cherry, is a context in which bebop stylistic devices sound artificial.

Cherry also frames smooth jazz as involving more groove and more rhythm than straight-ahead. He presents a racial environment theory of rhythm:

We're so un-rhythmic now. Nobody really grooves anymore ... Different minorities ... they still move. They still feel. How many people do you know ... when you go to dances that are actually moving to the music? ... In the African American community, they all do. They're digging, they're moving, they're setting up that groove. The Hispanic community, they're dancing. Brazil, they're dancing. Part of that, when you become a musician, you're able to pull on that. You're able to go back and forth between two different sort of things ... Yes, environment and culture ... Can you teach rhythm? ... To a certain extent, yes, but unless you're in that environment, you're never going to get it. There's something that's transmitted physically and orally that can only be acquired that way ... You can study a book and know the proper techniques ... That's not going to make you a jazzier ... You can't learn it unless you put yourself in that environment.

In this framework, smooth jazz is black jazz in Cleveland, with aesthetic practices that emerge outside of college institutional frameworks, including more focus on rhythm⁴²: "I think smooth jazz in Cleveland tends to be a little more rhythmic, a little more of a black sort of thing." For Cherry, college is synonymous with whiteness:

⁴² See Ben Sidran on rhythm in everyday life (Sidran 1983).

What I'm saying is that a person who has studied, it's easier to play Kenny G smooth jazz. And you'll realize that ... they have enough technique and enough ears to hear that. The progressions are longer—and by progressions, I'm talking about duration of progressions. So, over four bars, you have two chords. In straight-ahead, a lot of times, you have two progressions per bar and at a tempo that's like two hundred.

Institutional training can prepare a musician to play slowed-down chord changes in white smooth jazz, but it doesn't teach the groove of black smooth jazz.

Pro-Smooth Jazz as Music for Well-Being: Bobby Jackson's Efforts to Reclaim Smooth Jazz from the Corporate Suits

Veteran Cleveland jazz broadcaster Bobby Jackson has an ambivalent relationship to smooth jazz. He critiques smooth jazz as emerging from a deformation of the jazz tradition because of mass culture's role in diluting the form to reach a wide audience. He also celebrates smooth jazz, however, because of its ability to connect to black audiences in black spaces. While he is highly critical of jazz commercialization for a mass audience, he nevertheless celebrates performing for a local black audience as an integral dimension of what the jazz tradition is about.

Jackson writes on his website about attending a *Jazz Times* convention. During a panel session, Dr. Billy Taylor stood up and stated: "Any jazz radio station that doesn't play Johnny Hodges next to George Benson ... Well, that's not too smooth" (Jackson 2013). This comment inspired Jackson to create music programming that would "examine the music back to its roots" (Jackson 2013). This presented the opportunity to "retake, redefine and rededicate the moniker 'smooth jazz' and present programming that celebrates the music and the artists that have created the 'real smooth jazz'" (Jackson

2013). This platform would connect to musicians who were marginalized by both straight-ahead and smooth formats. It was a moment of reclamation.

Jackson situates himself as advocating for smooth jazz with renewed meaning. He writes: “The term smooth jazz is a moniker that over time has become the property of corporate suits and corporate bean counters” (Jackson 2013). Smooth jazz “became a cash cow moniker for businessmen who care little for the history and artistic aesthetics that endear casual as well as the most ardent of jazz fans to the music” (Jackson 2013). Against this corporate appropriation, Jackson makes a case for “smooth” as a compelling adjective.

“Smooth” was used as a comfortable term of acclaim. Fans “at one time might hear Stan Getz or Milt Jackson, or Wes Montgomery or even Grover Washington Jr. and not hesitate to say out loud in public or private how smooth that song was they just heard” (Jackson 2013). For most jazz fans, it has since mutated into a bad word.

The term has come to connote the worst of mass culture at the expense of artistic integrity. Jackson writes:

Crusader keyboard legend Joe Sample once told me that a corporate suit once suggested to him that he should create music that conforms to a particular style because it would sell and be popular. Of course, Sample was offended. (Jackson 2013)

Here, smooth jazz stands as an emblem for marketing that undermines artistic integrity. Musical selections were dictated by dollars, not by informed decisions about music. At the heart of Jackson’s argument is the idea that “programming should have never been left in the hands of people who know very little about music and can only draw from the sounds of what they already knew” (Jackson 2013). Smooth jazz functions according to corporate logic washed of the definitive genre distinctions of jazz:

Smooth jazz became a moniker that has been shepherded by programmers worldwide who do the bidding of consultants that “suggest” songs that come out of the world of R&B, soft rock and pop to program because they “test well” in terms of likeability by listeners recruited to listen to songs and respond to what they heard. Songs carefully selected by music consultants and listened to in large rooms by music lovers who are not programmers. Average music lovers who know very little of the nuances that make jazz, jazz, let alone defining what is smooth jazz. (Jackson 2013)

Jackson attended another panel in which industry peers from both smooth and straight-ahead formats were present. In a conversation about smooth jazz, Jackson encountered Bernie Kimble. Kimble had once been the smooth jazz program director from WNWV-FM “The Wave” in Cleveland. Speaking with Kimble, Jackson stated: “You program music out of the pop world and you call it smooth jazz.” In response, Kimble replied: “We all know smooth jazz is not jazz.” Jackson asked: “If it’s not smooth jazz, what is it?” Kimble stated: “It is a lifestyle choice.”⁴³

For Jackson, framing smooth jazz as a lifestyle choice is abhorrent. It obscures the meaning of jazz: “If smooth jazz is a lifestyle choice, then what happens to children who don’t know what jazz is and listen to your programming? Do they think you’re programming jazz?” (Jackson 2013) From Jackson’s perspective, children will be duped. Likewise, this approach stifles genuine artistry:

It seems the cart is drawing the horse leaving no room for growth reflected in artists living, working and “creating” new sounds for us to hear. It leaves no room for us to get excited about and move forward as a collective culture. Ultimately, this putting of the cart before the horse has decimated what was once contemporary jazz stations. It has hurt many of the musicians who come from *real* jazz roots; musicians who sought to develop something different using their creative muse and blending the sounds of contemporary music played by today’s

⁴³ Consider this in relation to larger questions of media corrosion of public culture in the postmodern era. Dick Hebdige notes that “the so-called ‘depthlessness’ of the postmodern era extends beyond the integration of signs and commodities into salable ‘lifestyle packages,’ beyond the tendency of the media to feed more and more greedily off each other, to affect the very function and status of information itself. It may be that the Left will have to dig deep to find strategies capable of coping with the apparent ‘depthlessness’ of new times versions of the ‘public realm.’” (Hebdige 227–228, “After the Masses”)

youth into their own musical palettes. Music that reflects not only how we live both past and present, but as art often does, gives vision to the future. (Jackson 2013)

“Real jazz” here exemplifies values framed as incompatible with corporate culture:

“moving forward,” “creative muse,” reflecting “past and present” and giving “vision to the future” (Jackson 2013). Jackson portrays contemporary radio as a realm of commercialism as opposed to a time when other values prevailed. He writes:

I grew up in an era when the radio host told you what was hip, who introduced you to the new sounds and the artists that create them. Professional hosts who brought the music and voices to the air because they had the inside track on the new. (Jackson 2013)

Radio hosts are interested in making it to the next commercial, not in “engaging the music on a personal level or bringing on an artist to talk about their music” (Jackson 2013). Jackson’s program *The Roots of Smooth* seeks to remedy this situation.

For Jackson, smooth jazz has acceptable origins. It originally comes out of the “real jazz” genre primarily, but the tributaries to smooth jazz come out of most genres of music including R&B, European classical, Latin, hip-hop, electronica, pop, rock, etc. Instead of being “a lifestyle choice,” smooth jazz is “the texture of music played within a genre that conveys a certain feeling of calmness or of well-being in the listener” (Jackson 2013). Smooth jazz also involves “a spiritual level that is not easily explained in words but felt in your heart and soul. It is rich and can reach a listener in profound ways that require no explanation” (Jackson 2013). *The Roots of Smooth* airs once a week, with a particular devotion to smoothness. The show provides “a place for various music genres to co-exist on the same program and to be heard in a context that connects these genres in relation to a particular featured artist” (Jackson 2013). He also states that musical commentary connects beyond music. Musicians address “their own unique and individual

humanity, creating a lens that at times examines their lives in intimate ways that you wouldn't find in a music composition" (Jackson 2013). The show featured artists typically connected to smooth jazz as a genre, including Grover Washington Jr., Joe Sample, Bobby McFerrin, Roy Ayers, Lenny White and George Duke. It also featured performers who expand the definition: Tito Puente, Zachary Breaux, Ray Barretto, Tania Maria, Christian McBride and Jon Lucien. Bobby Jackson's efforts sought to reclaim smooth jazz on the radio.

Bobby Jackson presented a picture of communities with local cultures exemplifying smooth sensibilities that were homogenized by corporate stations. Corporate radio "made them all sound just alike ... What they didn't take into account was that communities had their own musicians ... their own way of speaking. Their own culture. But they homogenized all of that" (Jackson 2013). In his broadcasting work, he redefined and reclaimed smooth jazz to fit within a framework of "real jazz" that wasn't subsumed to corporate interests.

It's Hard to Be Soft: High Audience Expectations and the Craft of Smooth Jazz

I spoke with bass player Smitty from the smooth jazz group Just About Music, or JAM, regarding his experience playing music around Cleveland. Smitty notes:

Gospel and jazz is kind of like, almost like a similar type of a feel. It's just a couple notes that really makes a difference in the sound. But basically, you can get a real good jazz feel ... If you can play gospel, you can pretty much go to jazz with no problem at all ... The guys that I played with in the gospel group were excellent jazz musicians.

Smitty suggests that gospel is a very capacious genre, often housing other genres.

[Gospel] is phenomenal ... The musicians that are coming up now are coming up younger, more advanced ... You have gospel songs ... They done took the music from R&B songs, but they changed the words to 'em. They might do the same

thing with jazz. Maybe something, an old jazz song. They would change the words to fit. Then you got your regular traditional gospel-type music ... Gospel music has evolved a whole lot ... They got the music where you can reach the kids, but also keep the adult crowd. It captures everybody. It's really wide open right now.

Given gospel's breadth and flexibility, it is not surprising to hear that musicians from smooth jazz can move in and out of gospel. Smitty did mention some differences: "In gospel, more action on the snare. A little bit more action on the snares. Doing your rolls ... Music breathes more in jazz. But it's almost the same." He notes: "Most of the cats out now, they came through me, out of the churches and into the jazz field."

Smitty does mention that performing smooth jazz involves being closely attuned to what is going on with the audience: "When you see the people aren't really into what you're doing, you get out of the song ... If they look bored or like they not feeling what you doing, you get out of it ... shorten the song up." Smitty would go on reconnaissance missions to clubs before performing in them: "What I would do, whenever I would go in there and feel the crowd out, see what they liked. That would be the best way to see what we could do." Partly due to their concerted attention to audience tastes and their musical versatility, the group has been generally successful with crowds:

We never really had a problem. We can take R&B songs, slow it down ... and then we would swing it. We would put a swing feel inside the R&B song ... and the guys would improvise right off that part of the song ... [We could do that with anything] ... "What's Going On." Any Chaka Khan songs.

Although JAM has been pretty successful with audiences, Smitty does note that

Cleveland crowds are hard to impress:

When you play in front of a Cleveland crowd, they have that feeling: OK, you're supposed to play for us. What? You want us to clap? ... Cleveland crowd likes to hear nonstop action ... We used to connect our songs ... When you connect 'em with good breaks, good beginnings and good endings, they very receptive ... They love to hear that. They can hear their favorite song and you done put

something else on it. You stopped it and went into another one of their favorite songs. That's when you know you got 'em. They get excited ... They hate for you to come out of a song and "What you gonna play next?" ... When you playing for a Cleveland crowd, you want to make sure you've got your songs connected from one to the other. If you don't have it connected, you don't leave a lot of air ... If you don't have a song ready, you better talk to 'em, joke around before you get your next song going ... gotta keep 'em pumped up, you got 'em. Cleveland is a hard place to play. If you can play here in Cleveland, you can go anywhere and play ... We done a little traveling, going to Maryland ... even going to Akron and Canton ... People love it. Cleveland crowd, if you ain't got it, they'll let you know. "Well, I heard that song before and it's nothing different" ... If you ain't got nothing different for 'em, they'll let you know. If you're doing something good, they will let you know. Overall, I love playing for a Cleveland crowd because it really gets you together.

Smooth jazz audiences in Cleveland are demanding. They are tough to please, even if their standards of evaluation are different from the standards of music school. Cleveland crowds want a mix of the familiar and the original:

They want it to be the same; they want to be able to sing that song the way it is sung on the radio, and after you get through all of the regular structure of the song, then, "OK, what you have? What can you do different that I haven't heard on that song?" ... That's what we try to do. Put something on the end of it to make it sound good.

But once you could impress the audience and understand their interests, then musicians had some control: "After you felt out what the audience want, then you can pretty much play what you want to play. You can sneak a song here ... You would give 'em what they want."

Reflecting on his earlier career, Smitty remembers learning genre versatility in order to adapt to different audiences. For example, learning to play the blues got him certain gigs. This was because "older adults wanted to play more your bluesy-type style." He also notes how his band would shift from blues to more of a smooth jazz style over the course of an evening, as the audience changed. At a club called the Tiger's Den, "The earlier the hour, that's the type of music we would play. Later in the day, that's when we

got more contemporary because the older crowd at that time. It was like an after-work crowd. So they would come in and we would play that style.” Similarly, with a venue called Val’s, “The earlier we got there, that’s the type of music we would have to play ... more of a bluesy type of style ... After nine or ten o’clock, the venue would change ... We were doing a lot of blues songs out of the real book. We would do the B. B. Kings, the Albert Kings ... We tried to learn as much as we can.” The real book, along with the fake book, function as de facto canonical repertoire for musicians.

Smitty noted that jazz clubs changed with the advent of smooth jazz radio:

Jazz started to change. At that time, people were into your old jazz, your “Footprints,” “Little Sunflower,” “Autumn Leaves,” [Take the] A Train” ... that type of stuff they would like ... Then it started over to more of the contemporary stuff. They were taking R&B songs. Instead of having a vocalist, you had a saxophonist or a guitar player play the headline, the lead vocal line ... Your crowds would start to get bigger. That’s when the WAVE [radio station] soft jazz thing started coming in ... It was amazing to watch that change. In the clubs, people started asking for contemporary jazz like the Grover Washingtons and, at that time, Marion Meadows and the Jeff Lorber Fusion-type music. Kenny G-type stuff. Like I say, you had your Spyro Gyra and your Gerald Beasley-type music ... the Al Jarreau, Anita Baker.

In describing the kinds of clubs where he plays now, Smitty emphasizes the challenges that different kinds of venues present for reaching the audience. He says most clubs have “a bar, a sit-down, where you can sit down and eat” and a place “where you can dance.” For Smitty, the most difficult venues are “more your bar-type clubs.” In these venues, it’s “harder to get a hold to because they drinking ... Unless you really hittin’ ’em hard to make them turn around ... they not listening to the music that much.” However, “once they spin around in the stool, that’s when you know you have ’em.” In restaurant venues, conversely, audiences tend to be immediately receptive. He notes that in “your more sit-down eatery-type places, they are there to listen. They eatin’ and they listenin’ ... gettin’

into what you doin'." In these same venues, audiences "also dance ... When they do hear a song that they really like ... then they dance." The band responds accordingly by performing to support the dancers, removing flourishes. Meeting the demands of a Cleveland crowd not only involves impressing audiences with a layer of creative complexity over a familiar repertoire, it also involves knowing when to reduce the components of an arrangement in order to coordinate with audience dancing: "If you get to the point where they dancing, then you take the extra hook that we would normally do and we might not do it. We might have a time signature change and we might not do it. We don't want to throw nobody off the beat when they dancing ... You reach a crowd like that." However, the band puts its filigree in all the way when the audience is seated and attentive: "If they not dancing and they listening, that's when we put on a show."

Smitty and I spoke about the many venues where he used to play. As in many of my interviews, Smitty pointed to how many clubs were no longer around in downtown Cleveland. He noted that in his current neighborhood of Maple Heights,

believe it or not, in this area, there's more live entertainment than in the Cleveland area where it used to be ... It used to be a lot of places in Cleveland where you can play. Now there's just a selected few places where you can play. People are now having more live bands at their private affairs, birthday parties, anniversaries, even in churches are having live events ... We have this affair we throw for my church. It's called Jesus, Jokes, and Jazz, where we have comedians and we have jazz music ... Jazz music is really more in the private affairs, the private venues, than really what you're doing with the nightclubs.

Near his home, there are two clubs at the Southgate shopping center, a club called J-Roy's, a club called Kings and Queens, and the Getaway. They also occasionally perform at Club 305 in Akron.

In Maple Heights, “there’s a whole bunch of musicians out here.” This includes Ike Wiley, the drummer from the Dazz Band, and Dwight Clarke. Smitty moved to Maple Heights to buy a home:

When I moved out here, I was doing all my playing in the Cleveland area and I was working in the Cleveland area ... I wanted to buy a home. The same style home in Euclid was like eighty thousand. When I came out here, it was like sixty ... It worked out ... I’m playing a lot out in this area, the church I’m playing at in this area ... At the time, Cleveland was getting a little rough. I had my kids ... Didn’t want them to have to go through violence ... gang violence, not exposing them to all those drugs. Grow up in a kind of normal environment and not be distracted by what was going on in the city ... One of the reasons I came out this way, for protection.

Smitty notes that in his band “everybody got a job. Everybody but me. I retired. I worked thirty-two years at Lincoln Electric.” His current band, JAM, was previously called Full Circle. The group “got to be real technical, more orchestrated. Breaks, riffs and more orchestrated.” Prior to Full Circle, the group was called Shakedown, after a Spyro Gyra album. This band had a jazzy, Latin kind of feel with singers. They did a lot of Sade, Roberta Flack and Anita Baker. This band was “real pocket.” That is, the group is “in the pocket,” oriented around a collective groove built with a nice feel and fresh sense of time. JAM currently uses many members of Forecast. Smitty met many of these musicians through gospel. Smitty’s group has an adaptive group sensibility, ready to meet their audience where they are with a repertoire that’s generally limited to the sphere of smooth jazz and R&B; other musicians cross the border and close the gap⁴⁴ in a different way, moving beyond smooth and straight-ahead styles.

Monica Carter, Funkdafied Jazz and Sweet 16

⁴⁴ This is a reference to Leslie Fiedler’s idea about the postmodern orientation to bring art into everyday life.

Drummer Monica Carter is from a middle-class neighborhood of Warrensville Heights. It's a nice, predominantly black area. As she was growing up, her parents worked. Although they provided vital inspiration, she "basically had to teach" herself. Her "father was a quartet singer in the gospel field, the Mighty Righteous Souls. He started singing gospel in Alabama, and when he moved here, he found a group and he got hooked up with them." This led to her performing quartet gospel music. Raising his daughter, her father would "put on videos. You'd just have to sit on the couch for an hour and a half. That was our daddy-daughter time ... We used to sit at home and watch videos. He used to have to sit me in the front row ... I kept my eyes on the drums." She left the Warrensville School System to attend the Cleveland School of the Arts. "I wanted to get into Cleveland School of the Arts to kind of mold my little gift and talent. So I gave up going to a suburb school to go to a magnet school, which was to learn more about music." Speaking about her band Funkdafied Jazz, Carter told me that "we'd take popular R&B and jazz songs and we'd flip it and make it our own." Her all-female band, Sweet 16, was four years in the making. The group started off as a gospel ensemble called Women in the Spirit: "We started to play gospel, then we would go out, people would ask did we play jazz. So I started this band called Sweet 16."

In putting together her female band, she told me she had been unsettled by the sexual politics of her previous efforts:

I had a band of guys. The groupies. The groupies come out. You know, girlfriends and wives are affected. You get hit on by the guys a lot. I was like, man: put together a female band. It's less stress. It's definitely less stress. We help each other pack up. It's like a family. It's rare because a lot of people say a lot of females can't get along, but we have that common factor of music—it just binds us as a family. I have a bigger group. Ten women. And it works pretty well.

She notes that there are more women musicians than one might expect:

There's a lot of women musicians. It's just that the demand of being a wife, a mom, working, I met a lot of women who just stopped. It's just, wow, I'd rather learn to juggle how to be the wife and the mom and the musician than just to have to choose one. And music not being the main option. It's a lot of women out there that can play, they just lack the stability to be a full-time musician. I'm one of the ones. I wake up and if I didn't do anything with music, I didn't serve my purpose for the day.

She also suggests similarities between the ability to multitask at the drum set and the ability to handle the many pressures she faces as a woman:

I'm a female. I can multitask ... Being a woman, you gotta know how to multitask. I'm texting people back, sending e-mails, giving my daughter a bath, fixing the meals ... part of being a woman. Thinking of a beat in my head. Eight different things. I'm every woman.

She also suggests that audiences bring a response to her performances that is inflected by gender: "I really don't have a problem, I guess because I'm a female and the energy I give off onstage. Most of the time I get that back."

As a professional working musician, Carter is developing her skills so that she can play across genres. Monica Carter's band Sweet 16 illustrates one version of how smooth jazz is connected to the Cleveland jazz scene. During my fieldwork in 2013, Carter was living in Cleveland, but had been touring and making connections, particularly in Atlanta. In 2011, she made a splash at "The Next Great Drummer" competition at Sam Ash Atlanta. She was also picked up as the drummer for Atlanta artist Kim Joyce. Additionally, she had been flown to the final round of auditions to be Beyoncé's drummer. She told me: "Being a musician from Cleveland, a lot of opportunities don't come here because we're not LA or New York. So you really have to get on the Internet and be proactive." I interviewed Monica after one of Lafayette Carthon's Monday-night "Faith Nights."

Carter told me that she grew up in an Apostolic household in which “nothing but gospel was allowed ... I couldn’t listen to love songs.” She plays in three churches: Bethany Christian on 116th; Antioch Baptist Church at 89th and Cedar; and a “church on Saturdays on 105th Street by St. Clair called Glendale’s Seventh-Day Adventist.” She has gigged in smooth jazz, straight-ahead jazz, Latin and reggae, “tapping into all these different genres so I can stay working.” She describes the general sensibility Cleveland musicians have toward playing a wide variety of gigs: “Most people I talk to just be glad to be playing something besides the basement.” In her conception, gospel remains the base because of its influence on other genres: “Gospel is that flavor where if you can play gospel, you can play anything.” But gospel is also her musical home, and always provides an unexpected journey: “Growing up in a gospel church ... sometimes we just play off feeling, you don’t know where the songs going to go. It kind of puts you ahead of the game when you learn gospel first.” By cutting her teeth in gospel, Carter has developed the capacity to listen and respond in real time, skills relevant to all kinds of music.

Carter also explains how genres from outside enter gospel and how gospel genres enter the outside. For example, she notes that the

funnest thing to do in church is to sneak some jazz stuff into service. I think most people don’t know what we’re playing. It’s just like a musician thing. One day we were in worship and Lafayette started to play an Anita Baker song.⁴⁵ The musicians started laughing and we looked out there and everybody is still in worship. It’s just hilarious.

⁴⁵ Part of the joke here is that Lafayette Carthon worked with Anita Baker during his years in popular music.

Aside from occasionally making under-the-radar musical references to jazz and popular music, she notes how her performances in gospel are inflected against popular music in order to attract people to church:

Gospel is definitely well-rounded. It's kind of like out the box of the traditional gospel ... A lot of it can pass for both gospel and R&B. To be honest, that's how you want music, you want it to be able to reach the people that wouldn't normally come to church, so we're kind of edging out the box now and it's kind of bringing in some more young people.

She notes that while some gospel musicians play only church music, other musicians play a wide variety of genres:

You can get everything in one service. Gospel feel, jazz feel. You know, traditional gospel, hymns. Well-rounded musicians like that [Lafayette Carthon, Drene Ivy], you definitely can get some surprises here and there in service. It's kind of cool.

She also notes that leading gospel musicians on the national stage, like Tye Tribbett, set the framework that local artists follow: “You got rock. You got jazz ... You gotta create a fan base that's anxious for your next project to come out.”

Carter also describes her frustrations in performing in venues where she is in the background. This is a problem that is part of playing for gospel brunch:

A lot of places now, when people are coming to eat and fellowship, they don't really want a band to perform, they want background music, so that's why I'm getting into doing shows ... People don't want to scream to the person in front of them, and a lot of owners want to keep you way down [in volume]. It's like, dude, play a jukebox. We get caught up in the moment and want to jam out. So a lot of places, they have the money for bands, but they don't really have the venue for bands. That's why I want to do live shows, real shows.

Live music is now frequently employed to meet the expectations of recording technology. Instead of recording technology being used to capture live music, Carter's live shows are split into performances, such as gospel brunches, in which her employer and the audience want her to capture the background sensibility of recorded music—and shows in which

her group isn't restricted to playing at a low volume and can jam out. Technology has restructured live gospel culture such that audiences and owners feel at liberty to turn the volume down on the live performers.

Carter self-identifies as a smooth jazz musician: "I've recorded with some smooth jazz artists. I'm working with a smooth jazz album now with the ladies. Sweet 16.

Smooth jazz record." When I asked her why people like smooth jazz, in the context of its relative simplicity compared to straight-ahead, she told me: "Smooth jazz, sometimes musicians need to relax, no words. Just let the music take you wherever it's going to take you. The saxophone is speaking and that's all you need to hear sometimes." She also notes that smooth jazz fulfills audience interests that are not necessarily satisfied by the more technical straight-ahead genre:

Sometimes people want to go out and hear very technical music, and sometimes you just want to hear some feel-good music. You've had a long week and you just want to unwind. Some people went there and dissect every change that you have played. It just depends on who you're with and what they're about.

Smooth jazz tends toward an affect of relaxation for nonprofessional musicians who have had "a long week" at work; dissecting changes tends to be the audience approach of the professional musician and the intelligentsia, demanding masterful display more than sonic emotional comfort.

For Carter, crafting a smooth jazz tune involves creative adaptation: "I'll take a cover any day with my band. Take the words from the cover. Add a different feel to it. Then just flip it and make it your own." Carter also points to the importance of melding innovation with liveness:

I just think for us to get hired to play live, people don't want to hear how it is on the radio ... They can listen to the radio. If you come out, express yourself. If you're paid to take the stage, express yourself. "Ain't No Sunshine" ... Play it

how you hear it. Most of the time, people respect you because you put your stamp on it. I don't want to be a copycat when I play out. I want to be able to take people to places they're not expecting, not how they just heard it on the radio.

This framework positions live jazz performance in conversation with radio airplay in a way that's very similar to the paradigm of smooth expertise expressed by Smitty.

Audiences want radio tunes, but they want innovative live versions of them. Carter suggests that audiences in Cleveland hold musicians to a very high standard: "If you can get applause in Cleveland, you can make it anywhere. There's so much talent here. They're not impressed. So you really have to build a fan base here in order to get that response."

Despite charges that smooth jazz is not organically developed, not soulful and not feelingful, Smitty and Monica Carter suggest that something like the opposite is true for them: it is music held to a high standard of emotional intensity by a demanding audience connected to aurality and the black church. Smooth jazz fulfills the audience's need to be collectively enlivened rather than aesthetically challenged.

The Complete Musician: Smooth Jazz and Flexible Musicianship

Appreciation for smooth jazz can also fall within a stance that seeks to valorize all music. For example, African American trumpeter Chris West told me about musicians he deeply respects on the Cleveland scene: these people have such an expansive skill set that they are contextually flexible. There are a "lot of players whose demographic didn't line up with their style." He points to African American trumpeter Sean Jones and white pianist Jackie Warren, for example, and says they "can do anything." Though well-respected by Wynton Marsalis and Jazz at Lincoln Center, Jones also takes gigs in Latin

and smooth contexts; Warren, similarly, is often called the Queen of Cleveland Jazz for her performances in straight-ahead, Brazilian and Cuban contexts. West said he “had no problem with it” and “appreciated their versatility.” In his development as a performer, he spoke about honing his craft in front of different audiences: “Whoever would listen, I would put it out there ... I put it out there for whoever.”

In his own performances, he says he’s attuned to race and class differences. This is part of his professional skill set. Pleasing different audiences means different things, depending on the environment, but this is the best way to stay working: “We’re still with a business ... If it don’t make money, it don’t make sense to them.” So he alters the repertoire to fit the venue: “What kind of music you present has some kind of demographic.” Playing in an upscale club, “you’re not going to turn it up and go crazy.” This is distinct from playing the way he plays for Two-Dollar Tuesday in a black club. There is a live jazz culture across Cleveland. Musicians adjust their sounds according to different audience expectations. West plays straight-ahead, smooth, Latin and funk gigs, noting that he prides himself on attuning not only to the musical style, but also to different audience expectations within the same genre on the other side of town.

The Complete Musician: Race and Straight-Ahead

Similarly, when I interviewed Bill Ransom, the drummer who bused himself into a white high school in order to gain access to a musical education, there was a curious moment in our conversation. He said: “I was thinking about it the other day. I’m the only black straight-ahead musician on my instrument in Cleveland. Is that right?” I thought about it for a second and agreed. Although it’s possible that neither of us knows the

answer to this question definitively, it was a significant moment because it points to the underrepresentation of black musicians in straight-ahead and the abundance of them playing smooth jazz and gospel. Ransom, with his classical chops, wide assortment of percussion from around the world, and fluency across the gospel, smooth and jazz genres, might be considered a “complete musician.” When I asked Ransom if he saw tension between straight-ahead and smooth jazz, this is how he responded:

I do both and I love both and at the end of the day, to me, it’s music. Sometimes you can have what’s called bitter men—a lot of jazz purists ... I could tell you if they were on the side of bitter men or neutral ... It’s funny cuz I love straight-ahead. My [straight-ahead] album did really, really well when it first came out. It peaked at twenty-five out of a hundred. Some weeks it was higher than *Tribes*, *Vibes and Scribes* ... It was beating a lot of people. I was like, cool. And it was classified as a post-bop album. And it’s funny, cuz I look at it from a musician’s standpoint. You have to be a musician. Not just: “Oh, he’s a straight-ahead player.” “Oh, he’s a smooth jazz player.” I just got off a six-week European tour with Beth Hart ... She’s rock, R&B ... hard-edge Janis Joplin-ish kind of thing. Some of my students say: That’s you? You play that stuff? I’m like: Yeah! ... To be successful and to call yourself a musician, you have to wear more than one hat. A lot of jazz purists, for some reason, think you have to eat, sleep and dream straight-ahead for the rest of your life ... It’s sad that you have a lot of jazz purists. One-dimensional.

Here, Ransom revels in the role of the border-crossing musician. Critiquing border safeguarding here, he sounds like a professional postmodernist, unimpressed by the elevated seriousness of modernist straight-ahead. He’s acquainted with straight-ahead bitter men who find smooth jazz to represent the ignoble defeat of the alienated modernist hero by the popular, a compromising accommodation to the thoughtless market. Ransom, however, is comfortable with musical pluralism and malleability in different contexts in a way that is at ease with commercial culture.

Is Playing for an Audience a Concession or a Skill?

In bygone times a feeling for nobility was always maintained in the art of music, and all its elements skillfully retained the orderly beauty appropriate to them. Today, however, people take up music in a haphazard and irrational manner. The musicians of our day set as their goal success with their audiences.
—Athenaeus (c. 200 CE) (in Giddins 2004: vi)

The categories of smooth and straight-ahead jazz are often constructed in relation to one another. They are contrasted and contested in relation to racial, vernacular, commercial, institutional and artistic factors, including the “groove” and different conceptualizations of difficulty. There is also a fundamental ambivalence as to whether pleasing an audience is a skill or a concession. Some imagine the audience as a commercial concession to the autonomy of artistic voice, even as others celebrate smooth jazz audiences as a viable connection to the black community. Still, the idea of audience itself is subject to inversions of center and margins. Cleveland jazz is a hall of mirrors in which the core and the margins keep trading places. Smooth jazz may be a successful reappropriation of mass culture or a hegemonic rearticulation of it; straight-ahead jazz may be an exclusive, elitist overhaul of jazz, or it may be an appropriation of the master’s tools, a mastery of form/deformation of mastery. People do what they can with the tools they have available to them.

Make It Real Compared to What?: Centers, Margins and Inverted Inversions

How is it that African American culture continues to be symbolically central in American society, while African Americans remain economically and politically marginalized?
—Black Hawk Hancock (2008: 783)

[T]he *pharmakon* ... emblemizes the discovery by the physicians of antiquity of the close connection between poison and medicine. Substances that kill can also cure if taken in the right ways and in the correct doses. Much of African American history and culture has revolved

around these kinds of inversions, around efforts designed to turn
humiliation into honor, refuse into treasure, dehumanization into
rehumanization, and poison into medicine.
—George Lipsitz (2010: 162)

Institutionalized jazz is the route we have to take in order to reach the
masses.
—Clark Terry (in Thomas 2002: 288)

With its associations with commercialism and pleasing audiences, smooth jazz is an odd fit with marginality. Still, smooth jazz, as Charles Carson notes, has been a marginalized subgenre within jazz studies (Carson 2008: 2). Studying smooth jazz involves an inclusive project of studying jazz. Here, Carson notes that “giving preference to historical narratives that favor Eurocentric ideas of autonomy and unity over sociological, popular, or even commercial concerns serves only to undermine the richness and complexity of the jazz idioms as a whole” (Carson 2008: 2).

The debate about smooth jazz and “real jazz” resembles a conflict between the center and periphery of the genre. The problem, however, is that neither the center nor the periphery is straightforwardly simple to locate. Locating the center of gravity in the jazz world involves some engagement with Wynton Marsalis, the figure who was the most successful in gaining access to institutional resources supporting the genre. Marsalis has been critiqued as emblematic of neoliberalism and corporatized American neocolonialism (Laver 2014). Moreover, Francis Davis once wrote of Marsalis as “rebellious against non-conformity” (Davis in Williams 2010: 440). Nevertheless, smooth jazz represents for many a tainted commercial sphere for this particular institutional center of gravity.

One of the major ironies of the Cleveland jazz scene is how the redistribution of recognition has not coincided with the redistribution of resources. This creates genre tensions in which white musicians involved in the new institutional system of recognition

for real black jazz are in a paradoxical relationship with poor black people who do not have the resources to access the real blackness available to those who study in institutions. The economic and political marginality of black people contributes to their marginality from the new institutional centers of jazz. The commercial mainstream of jazz thus serves the social periphery of poor people.

Real Jazz Musicians Debating the Meaning of “Real Jazz”

Perhaps the supreme irony of black American existence is how broadly black people debate the question of cultural identity among themselves while getting branded as a cultural monolith by those who would deny us the complexity.
—Greg Tate (1992: 153)

Writing in approval of John Gwaltney’s *Drylongso*, Robin Kelley notes that Gwaltney “allowed his informants to speak for themselves what *they* see and do” (Kelley 2001: 16). This chapter attends to multiplicity and contradiction with regard to attitudes toward smooth jazz in Cleveland’s jazz community. In an important sense, it is a defense of smooth jazz; the constellation of positions regarding smooth jazz in Cleveland articulates a genre that encourages audience connection, cultural memory and collective groove.

In the article “‘Out of Notes’: Signification, Interpretation, and the Problem of Miles Davis,” musicologist Rob Walser critiques approaches to jazz based in “classicizing formalism” (Walser 1993: 349). This cuts against modernist investments in the autonomous work. Walser’s position can be combined with Angela McRobbie’s critique of modernist “meta-narratives of mastery, which were in turn both patriarchal and imperialist” (McRobbie 1994: 54). “Real jazz,” as Jessica Bissett Perea argues, has

been constructed to exclude women. “‘Real jazz,’” Perea writes, “is the sole province of (male) instrumentalists, and as a mixed gender enterprise, ‘vocal jazz’ remains marginal to jazz history” (Perea 2012: 233). Perea also points out that “conventional histories of the modern jazz era have deemed vocalists as inherently commercial or popular, and therefore not ‘real jazz’” (Perea 2012: 230). Elsewhere, David Ake notes the long-standing connection between instrumental virtuosity and manliness in jazz. In particular, he notes how bebop musicians withdrew from the entertainer role, fostered a “competition-based jazz aesthetic” and “connected instrumental proficiency with standards of excellence, power, and manhood” (Ake 2002: 67).

“Real Jazz” and “Real Blackness”: Smooth Jazz and Fantasies of the Ghetto

The average, struggling, non-morbid Negro is the best-kept secret in
America.
—Zora Neale Hurston (in Hemenway 1980: 327)

In what ways does smooth jazz undermine fantasies about the ghetto? Proponents of the genre note that it is not played only by technical virtuosos; likewise, smooth jazz, with its consonance, presents a version of the inner city far removed from what Robin Kelley describes as common listener fantasies of the ghetto propounded in gangsta rap: “a place of adventure, unbridled violence, erotic fantasy, and/or an imaginary alternative to suburban boredom” (Kelley 2001: 39). Indeed, contemporary smooth jazz presents an eye to black urban life that is distant from the distorted lens many social scientists deploy in their studies. Kelley has critiqued social scientists for believing they knew real “authentic Negro culture” before doing their research (Kelley 2001). A range of scholars have produced work focused on a construct of “real blackness” far from the smooth

softness of many Cleveland acts; “real” blackness, Kelley writes, has meant “young jobless men hanging out on the corner passing the bottle, the brothers with the nastiest verbal repertoire, the pimps and hustlers, and the single mothers who raised streetwise kids who began cursing before they could walk” (Kelley 20: 2001). This approach has relegated everyday people to the margins of social analysis, outside of a constructed “realness.” Smooth jazz may be too “soft” for the “authentic” streets and too simple for the conservatory, yet it’s vitally meaningful for the community and culture of black Clevelanders.

Smooth Jazz Well-Being and the Question of Redemptive Difficulty

In what ways does the smooth jazz championed by Smitty, Monica Carter, and Bobby Jackson, with its emphasis on pleasing audiences and creating well-being, invert theorizations of musical difficulty and disrupt the assumption that people facing dissonant environments will create dissonant music? What are the implicit politics of care built into groove music?

Musicologist Rob Walser notes how critical stances are easier than empathetic ones, arguing that affirmation is itself a form of critique:

Of the critical and empathetic stances an analyst might adopt, the former is always easier. But millions of people make love to Kenny G’s music; it reassures, comforts, promotes tenderness. Empathetically read, Kenny G’s music is also a critique: its particular kind of beauty is meaningful for many people because it protests a world of too little tenderness, not enough nuance, too few caresses. If every critique implies an alternative, every affirmation is also a critique; its power depends upon its ability to address and redress pain and lack. (Walser 2003: 37)

Walser asserts that the widespread hatred of Kenny G by saxophonists is primarily about a masculinist discomfort with sensitivity:

Violent reactions to Kenny G's music, as well as graphic fantasies about his demise, surely betray a widespread cultural discomfort with, even contempt for, sensitivity. For many people, to admit to being moved by this music would seem to betray manipulation and emasculation—which is just what Adorno wrote about the jazz of Louis Armstrong. (Walser 2003: 37)

Comparably, serious rock critics have had a hard time with “soft” genres of various sorts. McRobbie and Garber, for example, point to the dismissal of teenybopper pop fandom as passive consumerism, even though it was based in active fan engagement (McRobbie and Garber 2000).

Likewise, rock critic Carl Wilson puts his own critical sensibilities under the microscope in his book exploring why some people love Céline Dion, while he hates her music. He explores the question of “whether anyone’s tastes stand on solid ground, starting with mine” (Wilson 2014: 19). Wilson’s critical orientation tends toward “knotty music” such as art rock, post-punk and free jazz. He justifies this orientation toward “difficulty” with the idea that it shakes “perceptions” and pushes beyond “habitual limits” (Wilson 2014: 20). Quoting Simon Frith, Wilson asserts that the difficult includes a “utopian impulse, the negation of everyday life” and an orientation for “another world in which [the difficult] would be easy” (Frith in Wilson 2014: 20). Carrying this logic all the way down, Wilson notes how difficult “easy” music is for him. He wonders whether easy music “deals with problems that don’t require leaps of imagination but require other efforts, like patience, or compromise. There may be negations there, but not the ones I’m used to” (Wilson 2014: 20). Engaging Pierre Bourdieu, Wilson also notes that taste distinctions may be a way of shaking off “the stain of the *déclassé*, the threat of social inferiority” (Wilson 2014: 87–88). Working-class people tend toward the pleasurable, entertaining and useful in their tastes. Higher on the class ladder, people devise more

elaborate reasons for liking what they like. In this way critics of Dion, like critics of smooth jazz, may be playing out a strategy for what Pierre Bourdieu calls *symbolic power* (Wilson 2014: 88).

For more than a few jazz musicians, smooth jazz was adamantly rejected as part of a stringent practice of boundary safeguarding, bolstering a sense of aesthetic integrity that depended on a qualitative difference between highbrow jazz and its profane, commercial other. As with any cultural substance that menaces a reputable symbolic order, the pollution portended by smooth jazz produced disquiet among Cleveland jazz musicians. Yet smooth jazz is difficult for the musicians who perform it; audiences have demanding standards. It presents an example of people taking commercial culture and turning it into usable community resources.

Cultural theorist John Fiske writes:

A text that is to be made into popular culture must, then, contain both the forces of domination and the opportunities to speak against them, the opportunities to oppose or evade them from subordinated, but not totally disempowered, positions. Popular culture is made by the people at the interface between the products of the culture industries and everyday life. (Fiske 2011: 21)

Ethnomusicology has a long history of articulating visions of musical value distinct from limited framings of complexity, creativity or technical innovation, John Blacking writes.

It is a field committed to understanding the vitality of all music:

In this world of cruelty and exploitation ... it is necessary to understand why a madrigal by Gesualdo or a Bach Passion, a *sitar* melody from India or a song from Africa ... may be profoundly necessary for human survival, quite apart from any merit they may have as examples of creativity and technical progress. It is also necessary to explain why, under certain circumstances, a “simple” “folk” song may have more human value than a “complex” symphony. (Blacking in Rice 2013: 2)

Upon completing my interviews, I realized that my interest in Cleveland smooth jazz was bound up with my efforts to, in the words of Ellen Willis, “arrive at some sort of honest optimism,” while also having the “courage to face the awful truth” (Willis 2014: 115). What was perhaps striking about the smooth jazz clubs was that they made me feel honestly optimistic; they were fun and pleasurable. As with Willis’s writing about rock, it was as if the “spirit of the people” had “invaded the man’s technology” (Willis 2014: 116). Smooth jazz struck me as buoyant and alive. It was a local appropriation of mass culture that, to quote Willis, “did more than simply suggest that life in a rich, capitalist, consumption-obsessed society had its pleasures; the crucial claim was that those pleasures had some connection with genuine human feelings, needs, and values and were not—as both conservative and radical modernists assumed—mere alienated distraction” (Willis 2014: 115).⁴⁶ Smooth jazz might offend the aesthetic sensibilities of jazz’s new guardians of high culture, but like the sensibility Willis wrote about in her engagement with pop music, “it was by definition populist (while modernist pessimism was, at least in part, an aristocratic vote of no-confidence in the lower orders), and it ... offended upper bourgeois pieties about art, taste, and the evils of consumerism” (Willis 2014: 116). Smooth jazz performances need to be new, but they need to be familiar; they are built on the cultural memory left behind by the restless consumerism of black popular culture. Smooth jazz is soft stuff, and it is soft in a way that is uncomfortable for critics contemptuous of softness.

⁴⁶ Similarly, David Foster Wallace has stated: “What’s engaging and artistically real is, taking it as axiomatic that the present is grotesquely materialistic, how is it that we as human beings still have the capacity for joy, charity, genuine connections, for stuff that doesn’t have a price? And can these capacities be made to thrive? And if so, how, and if not, why not?” (Foster Wallace 2012: 27)

CHAPTER 5
**A Tale of Two Cities (and Two Ways of Being Inauthentic): The Politics of College
Jazz, Creative Labor and the Ethics of Communal Emoting Between “Official
Cleveland” and the “Other Cleveland”**

Agoraphobia, fear of the marketplace, is problematic enough in artistic genres that have actually achieved, or inherited, some degree of economic autonomy. It is all the more remarkable for jazz—a music that has developed largely within the framework of modern mass market capitalism—to be construed within the inflexible dialectic of “commercial” versus “artistic,” with all virtue centered in the latter. The virulence with which these opinions are expressed gives a good idea how much energy was required to formulate this position in the first place, and how difficult it is to maintain. This is not to say that there is not an exploitative aspect to the relationship between capitalist institutions and jazz musicians, especially when the effects of racial discrimination on the ability of black musicians to compete fairly are factored in. But jazz is kept separate from the marketplace only by demonizing the economic system that allows musicians to survive—and from this demon there is no escape. Wynton Marsalis may pride himself on his refusal to “sell out,” but that aura of artistic purity is an indisputable component of his commercial appeal.
—Scott DeVeaux (1991: 530)

In *The Birth of Bebop*, Scott DeVeaux argues that bebop, the standard-bearing genre of “real jazz,” was itself subject to influence by commercial factors. Bebop emerged in the context of jazz cognoscenti, many of whom were financially comfortable and white. Entrepreneurs noted that there was an audience in search of distinction through accessing “the real”; these audiences held on to the idea that “the most authentic jazz took place ... in secret, subterranean places” (DeVeaux in Carson 2008: 4). As audiences expanded, it was obvious that, compared to big bands, playing in small ensembles could be financially viable. Charles Carson draws on this argument in his claim that commercial jazz isn’t opposed to real jazz, but that there is a need to rethink “popular assumptions about the relationship between creativity, innovation, and economics in jazz cultures” (Carson 2008: 4). Commercial jazz and smooth jazz,

however, are not the only genre categories subject to charges of inauthenticity. Though critics of these genres tend to be based in university programs, college jazz itself is often perceived as inauthentic.

Both College and Jazz: College Jazz as Inauthentic?

Jazz has been taught in institutions of higher education for a long time; nevertheless, college jazz is not a significant part of jazz history for many scholars. The academy is not part of the history of “real” jazz. David Ake notes that books about jazz tend to marginalize the role of college and high school jazz. Writing in reference to Mark Gridley’s textbook, he asks:

If colleges (and even high schools) have served as the most vibrant centers of jazz over the past generation or longer, why not note this trend earlier in his book and why devote only one paragraph to this circumstance? ... Certainly a shift of this magnitude would seem to bear more extensive comment in a history text. (Ake 2012: 241)

Ake also notes the sparse treatment of college jazz in *Jazz: The First 100 Years* by Henry Martin and Keith Waters, and its complete absence in Ted Gioia’s *The History of Jazz*, Ken Burns’s PBS documentary *Jazz*, or Gary Giddins’s essay collection *Weather Bird: Jazz at the Dawn of Its Second Century*. The invisibility of college jazz in this literature is belied by the longevity and magnitude of jazz in higher education. Berklee School of Music began in 1946. The National Association of Jazz Educators was formed in 1968. In his commentary on Gary Kennedy’s “Jazz Education,” Ake notes that Kennedy maintains an assumption about “real jazz” that is “separate from the evidently pseudo version taught and performed in schools today, though he never specifies the qualities that differentiate authentic from inauthentic styles” (Ake 2012: 243). Whatever college jazz

is, then, for Kennedy, it isn't real.⁴⁷ For many critics, learning to play outside of college offers access to "real jazz" because the line of transmission in clubs, churches and "the street" is supposedly more authentic. Ake is insightful about why that position doesn't hold together in the contemporary moment, in which jazz has ascended the cultural hierarchy but isn't financially remunerative:

Critics of college programs want to have it both ways. On one hand, they would have us believe that jazz is like European classical music in that it merits study in conservatories. On the other hand, they also insist that "real jazz" survives and develops solely on the efforts of its musicians, nightclubs, and record companies, independent of any assistance from those same conservatories, or what one jazz writer described in another context as "the crutch of subsidy." Of course, this free-market stance flies directly in the face of the deeply entrenched, anti-commercial modernist position held by many of these same pundits, resulting in a situation where musicians are expected to make a living exclusively through gigs and recordings, while not seeming to be playing for money. (Ake 2012: 256)

Outside of smooth jazz, there is very little money for working jazz musicians, except by teaching in academic institutions. A key problem shadowing discourses of jazz authenticity is *money*. Ake is right in critiquing the way that authenticity is defined against "the crutch of subsidy." The position he analyzes is haunted by a "real jazz" of alienated artists, sacrificing themselves for their cultural labor. If colleges are "vibrant centers of jazz," it is partly because they have done some work in holding the line against the complete deprofessionalization of jazz and its transformation into a sacrificial labor of love.

"Real Jazz" as a Celebration of Doom

Disparaging the academic institutions that support jazz risks "celebrating doom," to take a phrase from literary scholar Ryan Jerving. Jerving, in his 2004 article about

⁴⁷ This construction of musical realness as that which exists outside of academic spaces has some interesting parallels with studies of how disciplines form their object: see (Bendix 2009).

anthologies of jazz literature, notes that anthologizers of jazz literature are unreasonably committed to sacrifice. Anthologizers “glorify ‘doomed’ but ‘defiant’ heroes ... ‘alienated’ artist/reels ... or those who ‘sacrifice material security in order to pursue their art’” (Jerving 2004: 668). Against this framing of sacrificing for art over worldly concerns, jazz, for Jerving, is wrapped in “social forms and historical practices ... engaged with the warp and woof of a rapidly changing, broadly alienating modernity” (Jerving 2004: 669). Writing that reproduces the erasure of real institutional sources of support also reduces jazz’s viability as professional work. The pure, otherworldly, or authentic Other has little union bargaining power. These notions carry assumptions that accommodate material insecurity in the name of authenticity. They play into the logic of precarious labor based on, to take a phrase from Andrew Ross, “a steady supply of workers willing to discount the price of their labor for love of their craft” (Ross in Jerving 2004: 668–669).

Writing about the Justice for Jazz Artists campaign, headed by the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), Andrew Ross underlines the shared vulnerability of artists and academics within the “new economy.” Cultural labor is labor and must be recognized as such in order for AFM musicians to secure bargaining rights and contracts for adjunct jazz faculty at NYU. In Ross’s argument, academicians and jazz players have allowed themselves to be made economically vulnerable through “informal neglect” (Ross in Jerving 2004: 668). He writes: “the artisan-jazzman here shares the same position and predicament as the professional academic whose labor has been degraded and deprofessionalized in recent years” (Ross in Jerving 2004: 668). Both jazz musicians and academics tend to share a belief in “sacrificial concepts of mental or cultural labor”

(Ross in Jerving 2004: 668). This concept relies on assumptions built into a split between market and aesthetics that, as DeVaux notes, end up “demonizing the economic system that allows musicians to survive” (DeVaux 1997: 530). Although jazz musicians wage battles over the inauthenticity of college jazz and smooth jazz in Cleveland, the sharp contrast between art and commerce doesn’t hold true for everyone. In his ethnography of jazz musicians in New Orleans, Matt Sakakeeny notes that although it may be surprising for those “clinging to the notion that art should ideally remain autonomous from politics and economics,” there is “broad agreement among musicians, curators, and others in the cultural sector about the role of artists as workers” (Sakakeeny 2013: 83). In Cleveland, where everyone who receives a paycheck for playing smooth jazz is susceptible to charges of inauthenticity, and everyone who receives a paycheck for teaching jazz at a university is vulnerable to charges of inauthenticity in another way, it’s worth considering what else goes into the language of jazz authenticity as it links with discourses of racial authenticity. A central claim of this project is that in Cleveland, when people speak about jazz, they are also speaking about race. My argument in this chapter is that discourses of jazz authenticity in Cleveland are haunted by the displacement of black people through urban renewal. When people argue about jazz aesthetics, they are also making claims that implicitly resonate with a critique of the racial politics of Cleveland’s urban history.

Strong Money Going Against Money That Wasn’t Enough

In his defense of Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC), Gregory Thomas refers to John Storey’s point that culture is a “struggle over meaning, in which subordinate groups

attempt to resist the imposition of meanings which bear the interest of dominant groups” (Storey in Thomas 2002: 289). Here, Thomas argues that

JALC attempts to wrest definitional control from white critics and others in the past and present who use jazz for their own ends; for instance, the Communist left in the twenties and thirties; the State Department and the Cold Warriors in the fifties and sixties; or fusion radio stations in the seventies, eighties, and nineties. (Thomas 2002: 289)

He quotes Wynton Marsalis in stating his desire to bring “jazz in its real form to as many people as possible—that’s what I’m fighting to do. That’s really what my goal is”

(Thomas 2002: 299). Here, institutionalization is equated with popularization, confounding any simple distinctions between mass culture and art culture or between dominant culture and subculture. The idea that institutionalization *is* a way of creating a mass culture reverses assumptions about subculture and dominant culture by positioning Marsalis and others as subcultural infiltrators, using dominant institutional spaces—such as colleges—for their own purposes.

Spatial Politics in the Language of Aesthetics: Contradictions between Jazz, Money and Place

The new Cleveland is corporate headquarters, service and professional jobs, and downtown construction. The old Cleveland is neighborhoods struggling against decay, double-digit unemployment, racial tension, poverty and long-suffering schools.

—*The Washington Post* (in Krumholz 2011: 90)

Norman Krumholz, the man who became planning director of Cleveland after the election of the city’s first black mayor, Carl Stokes, describes competing visions of the layout of the city. Krumholz is known among urban planners for “equity planning,” an approach to planning that is oriented toward developing the city for the people living in

its neighborhoods. Equity planners tend to go against the planning priorities of people in power, who want to develop the city according to elite interests. Here, the equity planning vision of Cleveland concerned with urban neighborhoods applies to what I'm calling the "other Cleveland," while the vision of the business elite and city boosters, interested in attracting a middle class to the city, concerns "official Cleveland." Official Cleveland's interests merge with the agendas of urban colleges and universities. Indeed, Cleveland's University Circle, as historian Mark Souther argues, has long had an agenda of attracting white suburbanites—and the Cleveland Clinic, an institution key in displacing a large black residential area, sought to establish a "campus" feel.

Souther makes the point that scholarship on urban renewal tends to focus on downtown renewal or housing. He argues, however, that the Cleveland case included educational, medical and cultural districts at University Circle: "The University Circle venture, which marshaled not only universities but also museums, hospitals, religious congregations, and other institutions in the campaign for renewal, typifies this understudied phenomenon" (Souther 2011: 31). Souther's article "Acropolis of the Middle-West: Decay, Renewal, and Boosterism in Cleveland's University Circle" argues that during the 1950s and '60s, University Circle was interested in rebranding Cleveland because of the problems caused by deindustrialization. The renewal program undertaken by University Circle depended on private investors. The project was formed by Cleveland visionaries who sought to strengthen the cultural nucleus of the city, envisioning it as a hub for a rejuvenated urban image with a strong economy, fortified against decline. This new image was detached from those of adjacent urban areas and catered instead to suburbanites looking for safe, attractive landscapes accessible by car (Souther 2011: 53).

University Circle gained an image as an “acropolis” and was seen by many as insulated from the surrounding black community.

During an effort in 1976 to build a traffic loop around University Circle, a whistleblower charged University Circle Inc. with attempting to “seal off the Circle from the largely black surrounding area by roads” (Souther 2011: 52). Souther mentions that residents in the nearby black community of Hough considered Wade and Springbrook Apartments as a “White Island” and most likely viewed the University Circle campus in the same light (Souther 2011: 47). As an effort to revitalize urban Cleveland, University Circle has a long history of being a magnet for suburbanites. Cleveland housing historian Daniel Kerr locates this within the larger urban renewal strategy taken by the city:

From the Federal Housing Act of 1949 until the Hough Riots in 1966, the city of Cleveland embraced the urban renewal strategy to an extent surpassing any other city in the country. Combining urban renewal with highway construction, the city sought to contain African American residential areas, insulate downtown real estate, and protect the educational and cultural institutions (including Case Institute of Technology, Western Reserve University, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and Severance Hall) in University Circle. (Kerr 2011: 129)

Black residential areas experienced significant displacement on account of urban renewal projects.

Urban Renewal: Official and Unofficial Cleveland Both Have Jazz

In Cleveland, urban renewal involved about 13 percent of the city’s total land. Some 6,060 acres were spread across seven neighborhoods, all on the historically black east side. Krumholz notes that it was “the largest program in the nation and displaced thousands of mostly black, low-income Clevelanders from the Central, Mount Pleasant, Glenville, and Hough neighborhoods” (Krumholz in Keating 1996: 88). Despite this

sweeping project, only the downtown and Erieview projects drew significant investment: “As late as 1976, almost 30% of the city’s urban renewal land was vacant and unsold” (Krumholz in Keating 1996: 88). The problems of urban renewal were compounded by highway construction: “The construction of interstate highways 77, 71, and 90 displaced 19,000 more Clevelanders by 1975, also resulting in a significant loss to the city of both income and property taxes” (Krumholz in Keating 1996: 88). Cleveland persisted in a development project that neglected the priorities of urban neighborhoods. Krumholz identifies the business community as being influential and persistently interested in development, even at the expense of city dwellers. “It seemed clear to me from my earliest days in the city that the initiatives of the business community were uniformly directed toward new development and growth” (Krumholz 2011: 13). Krumholz writes that a development proposal—“especially one that can be built largely at someone else’s expense—is sure to get the enthusiastic endorsement of the business community. In twenty years in City Hall and out, I do not recall a single development proposal that the Cleveland business community opposed, and this includes all highway and urban renewal projects, proposals for a bridge across Lake Erie to Canada, a Domed Stadium, a Rock ‘n’ Roll Hall of Fame, and a \$3 billion jetport in Lake Erie. The Growth Association is, as its name implies, fixated on ‘growth and development’” (Krumholz 2011: 13). In Cleveland, development programs don’t serve the needs of the other Cleveland. In this regard, it’s a growth paradigm that shares important similarities with critiques of development that don’t fulfill the needs of so-called underdeveloped people.⁴⁸

Jazz occurs in both the Cleveland of urban neighborhoods and the Cleveland of “growth and development.” For example, trumpeter Kenny Davis, a longtime resident of

⁴⁸ See (Wynter 1996).

a black neighborhood, told me about his years performing as part of the jazz band hired by the Cleveland Browns. Similarly, Drene Ivy, an African American gospel and jazz pianist, had several gigs at the Cleveland Clinic during my fieldwork. Likewise, I went to see a local jazz group perform at a world music day at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame does important work in supporting local musicians and performing outreach work to Cleveland schools, yet the institution itself is embedded in the contradictory politics of city boosterism. Krumholz points out that most development projects, like the Hall of Fame, stadiums and museums, are “public-private partnerships, with by far the largest portion of the funding coming from public subsidies” (Krumholz in Keating 1996: 90). These tax subsidies “often diverted revenues from the deficit-ridden Cleveland school district ... The Cleveland Teachers’ Union maintained that from 1990 to 1995 at least \$35 million had been lost to the schools through tax abatement” (Krumholz in Keating 1996: 90). Given their low graduation rate and high dropout rate, these schools need the money (Keating 1996: 90). Additionally, urban Cleveland residents need jobs, and though the downtown projects promised them, their delivery has been underwhelming. When I spoke with Krumholz, an avid jazz fan, we discussed how much of Cleveland’s urban jazz scene had been “urban renewal-ed.” His perception was that it played out in a similar way to Pittsburgh, the city where he had worked before coming to Cleveland.

Black Urban Renewal vs. University Urban Renewal

For many years, jazz played a central role in this district near the University Circle area. Cleveland jazz historian Joe Mosbrook writes: “Over the years, there were

many nightclubs around the University Circle area. Byron Smith remembered, ‘You had the Sky Bar, the Mirror Show Bar, the Band On the Box corner, Jack’s Place upstairs on 105th, the Club 100 and the Town Casino.’ Others were the Cabin Club on Euclid between East 105th and 107th and the Alhambra Grill at East 105th and Euclid ... Also in the neighborhood was the Merry Widow Club” (Mosbrook 2003: 133). Winston Willis’s name appears in Mosbrook’s *Cleveland Jazz History* as the owner of the Jazz Temple. Willis opened the club in 1962. Jazz artists who performed there include Art Blakey, Les McCann, Miles Davis, Stan Getz, Sonny Rollins, Herbie Hancock, Dinah Washington and John Coltrane. During its brief tenure, the club was subject to bomb threats. One such threat occurred during a performance by Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers in 1963. Trumpeter Freddie Hubbard recalled, “Blakey told his band members, ‘I don’t care what they do, we’re going to play anyway.’” During the performance, Hubbard recalls, “a friend of Art’s came in and danced on nails and walked through broken glass.” Pianist Cedar Walton found the performance to be outside of jazz, and Blakey responded, “This will take the people’s mind off the bomb threat.” Although this bomb threat did not lead to a bomb, there was an explosion weeks later and the club closed not long after (Mosbrook 2003).

In addition to having run an important jazz club in the 105th and Euclid area, Willis has been called a leader of black urban renewal. Indeed, he emerged as the preeminent black entrepreneur to cultivate the 105th and Euclid area after the rebellions of the 1960s that reduced the size of the second downtown. A 1973 *Cleveland Press* article entitled “At E. 105th: Urban Renewal Willis Style” notes: “[T]he magic wand and wampum of Winston Willis have turned E. 105th–Euclid into the liveliest block in town”

(Kerr 2011: 193). A newspaper advertisement shows that Winston Willis hosted Horace Silver for a performance at 105th and Euclid in the early 1970s. This black entertainment area owned by Willis included jazz performance spaces and upset the “growth and development” vision of the Cleveland Clinic. This jazz vision of the area at 105th and Euclid was out of sync with the vision of the area promoted by University Circle developers. In the words of Souther, the area was “disturbingly close to the cultural district [of University Circle] that suburban Cleveland’s elite was cultivating” (Souther 2011: 33). Currently, there’s a large building owned by Case Western Reserve University where Willis’s entertainment district used to be.

John James grew up in Cleveland and saw the rise and fall of Cleveland’s second downtown. Indeed, he used to work at venues in the black jazz scene at 105th and Euclid, including some operated by Winston Willis. When I asked him what happened to the club scene, he said that it

just played out. Money stopped going down there. Cleveland Clinic ... Case ... Severance Hall. Art Museum. All that stuff in the same area there ... I don’t know ... That whole area, if you could see it now, has drastically changed, and it changed in a hurry ... Strong money going against money that wasn’t enough ... Whatever it is, they all faded.

For James, the loss of the clubs was directly tied to the aggressive acquisition and development policy adopted by the university-hospital infrastructure.

Prior to the closing of Winston Willis’s businesses, the Cleveland Clinic mobilized the language of “the university” in its public announcements in order to oust Willis from his properties on 105th and Euclid. Daniel Kerr notes that “the Cleveland Clinic Foundation proclaimed that the expansion would ‘transform the decayed urban collage of porno theaters, cheap bars, mostly substandard shops, declining housing, and

vacant lots into a *green, campus-like setting*” (Kerr 2011: 194, emphasis mine). Willis loudly lambasted the politics of isolation promoted by the clinic and became “a persistent thorn in the institution’s side” (Kerr 2011: 193). He criticized the clinic in press interviews and raised large billboards on his land chastising the clinic for hurting businesses in the area and failing to provide health care for the local poor. Regarding the clinic, he stated:

They are interested in keeping people off the street level and never let them out of the Cleveland Clinic enclave. That way, business in the area suffers and the clinic is then able to pick up buildings in the future for much less than their fair market value would have been. (Willis in Kerr 2011: 193)

Willis joined forces with other businesses in the area in objecting to Mayor Ralph Perk’s readiness to furnish the Cleveland Clinic with land at the expense of local residents. Additionally, they decried the physical infrastructure of the clinic, which had walkways that insulated hospital-visitors from the outside environment.

In some ways, the Winston Willis story is an exceptional one: the unique trajectory of a black businessman. Some people I interviewed suggested that I not get too close to the Willis story because of his supposed connection to illegal activity. Willis himself asserted that his engagement with the pornography industry, which caused many to deride him, was justifiable because of how difficult it was for a black entrepreneur to gain any foothold in a respectable Cleveland industry.

Whatever the complexity of the Willis case, however, it does present an instance in which black urban renewal failed—along with the sponsorship of jazz that could have gone with it. Jazz has persisted inside of University Circle, the Cleveland Clinic and other institutions within “the acropolis.” The black-owned clubs and businesses in the nearby area—worryingly close to the elite cultural district—no longer exist. Indeed, over the

years, University Circle institutions have presented an array of jazz performers: Severance Hall has hosted Herbie Hancock in concert; the Art Museum hosted Charlie Haden; and trombonist Paul Ferguson teaches instrumental jazz at Case Western Reserve University. Jazz has made it into the official Cleveland of University Circle, while the jazz of the other Cleveland is forgotten.

Some interviewees emphasized a direct connection between the fall of Cleveland's jazz scene and the growing power of its cultural institutions. In Cleveland, those who critique college jazz are doing so in a context in which town and gown tensions have run high; more specifically, their critique resonates with the racial politics of institutions, not just the imperfect jazz aesthetics that appear from within them. A history of hurt haunts Cleveland college jazz, partly because colleges were political players in institutional processes, such as urban renewal, that are understood by many Clevelanders to have treated urban black people poorly. Critics of university jazz are waging a critique of the vision of Cleveland that offers insulated "white islands" attractive to wealthy suburbanites against a backdrop of poor urban dwellers. The role of college jazz in Cleveland has been paradoxical, particularly because jazz has historical connections both to the other Cleveland of black urban residents, as well as the official Cleveland found in elite cultural institutions and trumpeted by civic boosters.

Depoliticizing Jazz as a Means of Erasing Cleveland's Black Urban History: The Politics of Jazz as the Sound of the Other Cleveland

The legacy of slavery and Jim Crow and segregation produced a relatively isolated space ... To produce alternative consciousness, radical traditions, et cetera. Devastating as they were, they had an upside with that kind of continuity. But what's happened in the last 30 or 40 years is the downside of racist integration, or what I call "inclusive discrimination" ... it's like,

what's the point of this? Leave me out here and discriminate. I'll be alright. But what that has done is that it's really eroded the assumption that we used to be able to make about black creative spaces being oppositional to a dominant cultural framework.
—Tricia Rose (Rose in Lipsitz 2014: 6)

Philip Bohlman once wrote that academic musicology's politics took the form of refusing politics. Bohlman writes that "the reason for the field's imagined escape into a world without politics results from its essentializing of music itself. This act of essentializing music, the very attempt to depoliticize it, has become the most hegemonic form of politicizing music" (Bohlman 1993). Although college jazz in Cleveland has a complex politics, it's not possible to say that college jazz is without politics. Its politics are not just about what jazz is, but also about who has the power to define jazz.

Arguments about the aesthetics of college jazz are haunted by the black urban renewal that could have been. It is a discourse haunted by the loss of vibrant black community spaces and by dislocation.

Aesthetic arguments play into the structural politics of racism as they connect to sonic indicators and performance practices of displaced communities. Whereas Jazz at Lincoln Center may be a format in which an exceptional black musician gains a footing within an elite institution, arguments about institutionalized college jazz in Cleveland resonate with a sense of loss over black neighborhood cultural institutions. Thus arguments about the aesthetics of college jazz are not only about what sounds are taught in the institution, but are also about social and political differences related to racial inequality in Cleveland. In short, the existence of college jazz necessarily leads to the question: Who has access to college institutions, and what are the ghosts of urban inequality/displacement?

The Contradictions and Ambivalences of Authenticity: Are Whiteness, Institutions, Money and Inauthenticity Inexorably Linked?

In this chapter, I am working conceptually to welcome the discomforts of contradiction and ambivalence. Underlying the issue of college jazz is a set of simple questions with complex answers: Are whiteness and money inalterably linked? Does every permutation of the following four categories consistently hold a connection?

Whiteness

Institution

Money

Inauthenticity

Earlier in this chapter, drawing on Scott DeVeaux, I sought to disconnect authenticity from money. This connection, however, reasserted itself in complex ways during interviews shadowed by a sense of striving for jazz to be both black and financially supported. People are ambivalent about making this link because it risks re-inscribing the institutional abandonment of the black urban poor—and the history of the black urban middle class prior to “root shock.”⁴⁹ That being said, arguing that jazz should not be financially supported or taken seriously is equally uncomfortable.

Shifting Infrastructures of Support from the Old School and the New School: The Social Life of Club Jazz and College Jazz

Frank Miller is a middle-aged African American jazz saxophonist who grew up in Cleveland playing jazz. He now heads the high school music department in the racially

⁴⁹ Mindy Thompson Fullilove, *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It* (New York: One World/Ballantine Books, 2004).

integrated, mixed-income suburb of Shaker Heights. Miller frames college jazz in relationship to the local scene and race. During the interview, we were sitting at the Velvet Tango Room, where John James was performing with Jesse Dandy and Randy Moroz. The Velvet Tango Room gives steady employment to musicians and hosts excellent performers. It is first and foremost a fancy cocktail bar, however; the jazz music is in the background, part of the ambiance. As we were watching these performers from the “old school,” Miller told me that community-based practice and transmission had ceased to be an option for aspiring jazz musicians. Old-school cats were still around, but the new school of musicians developed in higher education:

You know you have the people from the old school ... and they experienced through the club scene. It was more of ... folklore. It was passed on. They learned it by hanging out with cats, by playing with cats for many hours ... you know, that’s the way it was. That was the scene.

In place of that scene, there is a new-school scene housed primarily in higher education:

Against the scene now that’s ... academic ... with the demise of places to play and late-night jam sessions—there are no more late-night jam sessions, really. The only place to really learn the craft is you go to the college route. And the college route is: play this, play this, play that.

Miller sees some advantage in college jazz, though he told me that the academic route is only available to a certain racial demographic:

And unfortunately, the college route is a little bit one-sided race-wise ... of people who can actually go. You know ... it ends up being the white male who can go ... And they come back ... When they come back to Cleveland ... those guys are like, we’ve studied, we know our thing.

This results in a generational and aesthetic gap between young, primarily white musicians who learned in college and older, primarily black musicians who learned in the Cleveland club scene. According to Miller, the young, academically trained musicians

don't necessarily want to interact with the old-school people, who are maybe not as precise or like: Oh yeah, I'm playing this advance chord over this. I took this tritone modulation, now I'm going to put the quarter-tone harmony against it ... You know, those cats aren't thinking that way. They're thinking, "Hey man, we're playing this sound, we're working through these changes" ... which is a little bit different.

This creates a split, Miller explains, that both is and isn't racial. He says, "It creates a divide. And I don't necessarily think it is ... a race divide. It's really more than that. It shows up as a race divide for sure. It's also an economic and academic divide."

For Miller, there is an "unwillingness of people to accept both sides of the coin." By this, he's suggesting that jazz aesthetics are both the product of advanced theoretical study and of playing a sound within a community context. He also faults academically schooled musicians for excluding the community. This was evident at the Bop Stop, in which established musicians were "holding the torch." For Miller,

the scene is too small for jazzers to do that ... It's sort of: they're the vanguard. We get to decide who is on our level to play and I guess cats do do that ... It ended up being that unless you had our experience, you weren't as welcome ... and if you're not playing straight-ahead bebop, you're not as welcome.

Here, institutionally validated jazz runs up against local musicians who do not have that training or experience but who are interested in some version of jazz. Academically accredited performers pursue distinction in a way that fails to take into account the aesthetic expansiveness of the jazz tradition.

For Miller, engaging sophisticated, institutionally legitimated aesthetics dominated by whites must coexist with the aural jazz tradition:

It's better to go back and forth ... What happens eventually is that African Americans do their thing ... and white Americans ... they do their thing ... It ends up being separate ... It ends up being a different sort of thing ... When the older cats, when they're gone ... now we have a problem, because they will have lost a lot of the oral tradition.

Losing the community-based oral tradition means a loss of imagination and idiosyncrasy. Everything “becomes more academic.” He states: “It becomes less creative and becomes more homogenous ... The spark of creativity ... is gone, you know.” Predominantly, the college route tends toward a definition of jazz that then enters the scene:

Bebop or straight-ahead is the most taught in the colleges. I want you to land on this note. The seven is going to go to the three. It's going to resolve ... It seems to work best that way. You've got your D minor, D resolves down to the dominant seventh ... OK ... They set it up. You can study that. This is how they're doing that ... that straight-ahead scene, because it can be studied ... A lot of the white clientele or white people ... I hate to say white people ... I never talk in terms of black and white, but ... they come from that background ... they come from a school background and they say hey, this is the way it is ... A little bit more dogmatic about it ... If you don't come through this [college] scene, [you're not welcome in it].

Here, Miller equates school background with affluence and whiteness and asserts that college musicians have gained control over the elements of the music that are most conducive to being studied in institutional contexts. This gives them aesthetic and representational power, defining jazz as an exclusive, elite enterprise.

He frames his comments about the two sides of the jazz coin in relation to a context in which making a living is not financially viable. Here, college teaching becomes the only viable venue for a life in music. But even access to this situation emerges out of already established racial networks:

There's no market, there's nothing to sustain them. You'll end up teaching or you'll end up doing something else and playing on the side. It's not like it was ... And living on your own playing ... Most of the cats that are like really playing, they go and take a college gig and then go and do their own stuff on the side, you know. That's how they make it work ... You're going to have different communities ... you're going to have non-African American players playing here and here and here ... It follows who you are involved with ... You, yourself, you seek out a situation that is more integrated ... More people interact within their own circle ... If you're networking, who are you going to network with? The people in your own network first ... If you find you're not accepted in another network readily, why waste your time? It is what it is. But sadly, that's also the

thing that's killing the jazz scene. If we're fighting for scraps, we need to fight together ... instead of I got mine. I got mine.

In this interpretation, the racially divided network benefits white people at the expense of black people, but ultimately undermines any possibility of a viable independent jazz scene.

Within this framework, Miller has a certain sympathy for Wynton Marsalis because, for all his institutional proclivities, Marsalis emerged from a community context—and maintained an interest in the music as a living tradition. At least Wynton Marsalis is “trying to hold that tradition together ... And he would play ... He did both ... He would learn by listening ... But he grew up through that, and his father was a player and he played with cats ... and they played together.” Because of his exposure to “the cats,” Marsalis represents an important part of jazz as a community-based tradition and a popular music: “In the community, you learned by being in the community. People forget that at one time jazz was the popular music ... Everybody listened to it, whether it was swing or jazz.” Jazz also held a special role in black life in a racist society:

It was the one thing that allowed you creativity ... to exercise your creativity and mental capacity, other than some of the other venues that were open to African Americans—and there weren't a lot. So, if you're talking [the decades of the] '30s, '40s, '50s, you can't count on your two hands the positions that were available ... Music, yes ... that was an open thing where you could be creative ... and at least in your own community ... That's what I find.

In this narrative, the institutionalization and technocratization of jazz represents a desiccation of a vital form of black creativity that itself emerged out of limited opportunity. Losing connection to community-based tradition means losing connection to a realm where people explored human possibilities within a constricted space.

On the one hand, Miller acknowledges that jazz emerged as a black cultural form from an unjust system of opportunity. On the other hand, he celebrates the creations that emerged from this framework. On its face, Miller's argument would seem to be a target for an objection Robert Christgau once made to Nelson George's *Elevating the Game* and *The Death of Rhythm and Blues*:

On the one hand, both celebrate the integration of black creators into American culture. On the other, both regret the passing of segregated institutions that produced specifically black ways of shaping the world. Somehow, I told him, he had to resolve that contradiction. (Christgau 1998: 286)

Upon further inspection, however, the context of jazz in Cleveland is more complex. There is no simple choice between regretting "the passing of segregated institutions" and celebrating "the integration of black creators into American culture." Indeed, Cleveland *is* still largely segregated, even as jazz has gained some mainstream institutional acceptance. The jazz legacy of Cleveland is not an either/or, but a both/and of a genre that is performed across a fractured, unequal postindustrial city.

Better Than Nothing: The Race of Institutions

Jay Forman is a white trumpeter in his early thirties who grew up learning jazz in Cleveland Heights public schools, downtown Cleveland clubs and eventually at Oberlin Conservatory of Music. Throughout our interview, he alternately critiqued and supported college jazz. On the one hand, Forman told me about a jazz concert he had attended in a college setting in which he found the audience participation to be woefully second-rate. During the show, college-age audience members vocalized their enthusiasm for the performance of technical expertise; for Forman, the response was not coming from the right place, the place of a shared emotional connection. Forman said, "When you got to a

concert ... it sounds like [the college fan] is masturbating when the performer plays a great riff.” He notes:

It’s an academic masturbation. A lot of kids practice really hard ... They can technically understand ... what happens in the music ... They don’t ever get to that emotional place ... They hear a lick that they recognize, and on a technical standpoint they are very impressed, but they’ve missed the whole musical statement. They’ve missed the emotion. They’ve boiled it down to a science. They’re really taken away from the communal experience. Rather than having a communal event, which is what jazz has always been ... they start freaking out in a way that’s not in the tradition of people ... digging the music.

Against this form of atomized audience response to technical prowess, he explained his experiences as a young white guy going to black Cleveland clubs. At clubs like the Robin’s Nest (a black Cleveland club that went out of business several years ago), “people were yelling ... As a kid ... I can’t wait until I’m old enough to yell at a concert.” Thanks to his parents, who took him to see performances in black clubs from a young age, he was socialized into going to concerts in which people “are at a concert and it makes them respond ... It’s an American thing. No, that’s not right. It’s an African thing.” Forman holds that students in academic institutions learn to prioritize technical impressiveness over the ability to participate in and connect to group atmosphere.

On the other hand, Forman recognizes that colleges fill a need in presenting jazz: “I wish that there were more jazz clubs. That being said, there’s got to be one way or another for people to hear music.” Universities are fulfilling a vital function by making music available in a way that compensates for the sore lack of jazz clubs. Forman also supports college jazz because it’s a marker of jazz’s seriousness:

I’m not against jazz in college at all. It needs to be respected. It is high art. There are legitimate geniuses. Because of that it’s the root and the foundation of a lot of American culture in ways that most people don’t know. However, if it disintegrates into only being in the universities, then it’s going to go the path of

classical music, which is basically funded by very rich old white people. When they die, so will it.

Here, Forman presents jazz's cultural ascendancy as involving an embedded racial logic. The legitimation of jazz is ultimately dependent on white support. Thus jazz's institutional prestige becomes impossibly entangled with a form of powerful, institution-based whiteness. The push for a purist position on jazz as high art is stuck within a racial logic in which powerful white people make cultural respect for jazz possible. Forman's support for college jazz emerges out of his frustration that club jazz does not exist and a begrudging acceptance that white money for jazz is better than no money at all.

Black Critics of Cleveland's Jazz Institutionalization

Jerome Saunders is an African American pianist who has spent years gigging around Cleveland, though he holds a day job working for government social services. One of his long-standing gigs was in the lobby of the Cleveland Clinic. Another gig was at the Velvet Tango Room, a bar that caters to "the New Cleveland." In my interview with Saunders, he emphasized that jazz in Cleveland had moved away from the African American community and into an institutional space disconnected from it. Saunders situated the current state of jazz in Cleveland as a music that was decidedly unfit for ethnomusicological research; it had been disconnected from lived culture. He emphasized that in the past, Cleveland jazz music "was a culture that grew out of the community. The music grew out of a lifestyle ... the way people were living. Through their relationships, and the people and the culture and the folklore and everything else." This claim merged with the perceived racial exclusivity of contemporary jazz institutions. Saunders pointed out the limited number of black jazz instructors in Cleveland's higher education

institutions. For Saunders, this integration of music and lifestyle fit jazz's past into the realm fit for anthropological endeavor: "It's like if you're being a cultural anthropologist and you go hear music from the people in New Guinea. You live with the people and their music was based on the chores and the people ... It's all connected." In place of music as situated within community life, jazz's institutionalization has situated it firmly in the head. Saunders states: "Now it's kind of up here [points to head], and it's not connected to the body ... Now, it's just a technical art form." Academic jazz, for Saunders, is dominated by white instructors who focus on a technique that is disconnected from bodily ways of knowing. Additionally, Saunders asserts that academic jazz is standardized and aesthetically narrow. It "seems to resonate from a similar bandwidth ... They're manufacturing people." Here, his use of the word *manufacture* situates the academy as a metaphorical factory; instead of producing widgets, it produces musicians shaped from the same mold. For Saunders, this jazz has little to do with the music of vibrant black community life. Instead, institutional players are complacent in catering only to the privileged: institutions "don't come into the community to look for people. They don't set up enough resources so that the community can just develop people. Not really." Saunders's position laments the passing of jazz as a source of energy in Cleveland's black community and bemoans its passing into mainstream institutionalization.

Nevertheless, Saunders, like many other local black musicians critical of college jazz in Cleveland, speaks to a larger set of issues. On its face, his argument is about how technique taught in institutions undercuts "real" jazz. On closer inspection, this argument is also about how institutions are exclusive. The problem with institutions is as much

about what is taught in them as who has access to them and their role in reproducing the inequitable racialized geography of inequality in the city. When Clevelanders are critical of college jazz, they are not just critiquing the creativity of those institutional spaces; they are also highlighting a history in which urban renewal has boosted an elite vision of Cleveland and its university, hospital and cultural districts in a way that many perceive as being at odds with the interests of the black community. While there are not many black faces in jazz's institutional space, the "campus" environment of the Cleveland Clinic and the "shared campus" of University Circle continue to boost a rebranded city. Like the scholarship, outlined by Jonathan Sterne, on people who speak about "social difference through aesthetic distinctions; politics working in the language of taste culture" (Sterne 1999: 293), people in Cleveland speak about politics and social differences through critiques of college jazz. Critiquing the new school of college jazz is also a way of aligning oneself with a vision of Cleveland supportive of black neighborhoods and the ethics of community they produced.

One commonality held by Miller, Forman and Saunders is a sense that college jazz is not welcoming to poor black people. This closely aligns to the college performance aesthetic that doesn't connect to the audience. The atomized, professionalizing structure of the university undercuts what I'm calling the "ethics of communal emoting" that is part of the jazz tradition. This is an aesthetic element of the jazz tradition rooted in performance practices that, to use a phrase from Earl Lewis, turned segregation into congregation. The relational interactivity of the jazz club that is being lost through technical jazz is a sensibility that emerged from African American communal practices going back to call-and-response. While college jazz may

professionalize jazz, it comes at the cost of a vital communal creativity that is rooted in black strategies for survival. Though college jazz involves what Saunders describes as an intellectualization of jazz, this intellectualization has come at the cost of the collective intelligence rooted in black history.

Both/And College Jazz: The Politics of Either/Or

For many respondents in Cleveland, there is a fundamental problem with constructing “jazz and academia” as an either/or proposition. This is because many performers from “the streets” are employed in the ivory tower. African American saxophonist Harold Wall asserts that many universities feeding the Cleveland scene draw from club musicians. He states:

Those guys ... they were bringing their aesthetic into the academic scene ... They bring their thing to the academic ... the smartest thing that some of the colleges are doing. Oberlin in particular. They're hiring guys who are playing. And they hire those guys to come in and teach. You know, so they hired Kenny [Davis]. They had Neal Creque. Had these guys that were playing to bring in.

For Wall, colleges are not discrete entities separate from the jazz scene, but are locales vitalized by the energy circulating in the extant musical community. Guys “who are playing” become guys who are teaching.

Many jazz musicians who have paid their dues in the jazz world have turned to academic environments for employment. David Ake points out that musicians with enormous jazz credibility, including Kenny Burrell, Billy Higgins, Charlie Haden and Max Roach have been employed in universities as teachers, confusing any simple binary between “real jazz” and college jazz. Ake writes that the fact that there is a “new generation of musician-teachers belies the adage that ‘those who can, do; others teach,’ as

jazz musicians—young and old—increasingly consider the university or conservatory, rather than ‘the street,’ to be the prime training ground for beginners” (Ake 2002: 115). Still, college jazz remains a category to be criticized for many Cleveland jazz musicians, including some “real” musicians who work in colleges.

Ernie Krivda and the Politics of Swing in the Ivory Tower: Physical Response vs. Science

One such “real” musician who teaches in an academic jazz program but remains critical of college jazz is Ernie Krivda. Some of Krivda’s most formative development occurred in black Cleveland nightclubs and while touring with bands playing in dance halls. In both contexts, producing a physical response in the audience was crucial. As the head of the Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) jazz program, Krivda presents a layered critique of college jazz.

Krivda told me he “grew up playing jazz for dancing, you know, you play in dance bands. There was always a dancing component. You were playing for dancing.” Playing for dances was a skill: “Being able to do that was part and parcel to a musician’s—what a musician would draw from. His skill set. Even though it wasn’t necessarily a conscious thing, it was a thing that was part and parcel to what you did.” This skill “was one of the things that was ultimately, eventually lost, when jazz made the deal with the devil and moved into colleges.” According to Krivda, the first group of jazz instructors at universities were jazz musicians looking for a paying gig. They “were players.”

These musicians were looking, they needed work. They wound up teaching in colleges and simply by the way they presented the music, the rhythmic aspect, although never spoken of, especially by these guys, because they just took it for

granted: you gotta be able to swing. And they demonstrated by the way they would play and things like that. But as subsequent generations went along, this is lost now. The ability to create a physical response ... because nobody is talking about it, for generations upon generations, is being lost.

Krivda views his program at Tri-C as an exception to this larger tendency:

And outside of my—you know, the program I teach in and some others—nobody ever talks about swinging, right? That’s why I brought Frankie Manning⁵⁰ in to ... a clinic for my students. The idea is like: If Frankie can’t dance to what you’re doing, you’re not swinging.

Here, Krivda differentiates swinging for dancers from the science of jazz:

The focus of what this means ... all this stuff is an intellectual exercise or some kind of scientific demonstration. Or something that can exist simply on the strength of its science. And that’s the thing that’s been bad ... because music, at least jazz, has never been justified by the fact of its science, it’s always in the effect that it has on the people.

Krivda mourns “the loss of the ability to play for dancing.” He states: “I think dance is a big deal. Not just in Cleveland, but generally speaking ... just the ... ability to make people physically feel the music. When it started to get away from that, that’s when trouble started to brew.” Although the swing skill-set that evokes a physical response may not have been conscious for Krivda, the situations where he performed required it of him. In his opinion, current college jazz doesn’t put students into situations implicitly demanding such a skill set, nor does it provide instructors who consciously pass it on.

Scholars such as musicologist Howard Spring have argued that swing’s musical development was fundamentally catalyzed by dance. Swing flourished through the “dynamic relationship between musicians and dancers, in particular the musicians’ responses to the commercial and aesthetic demands resulting from changes in social dance” (Spring 1997: 183–184). Spring argues that the “relationship between the dancers

⁵⁰ Frankie Manning, a dancer, choreographer and instructor, is one of the key figures in the history of Lindy Hop.

and the musicians was ... a reinforcing feedback loop” (Spring 1997: 200). As a result of this relationship, Spring states, musicians developed “drastically new timbral and rhythmic effects” (Spring 1997: 183). Similarly, Eric Porter points out that musical understandings of the swing era are fundamentally linked to “the development of propulsive rhythm conducive to dancing” (Porter 2001: 39–40). In this origin story of swing music, playing for dancing was central. Within the university context, in which dance departments exist in separate silos from music departments, and music isn’t justified by the “effect that it has on the people,” this history can be ignored.

There is another historic irony about efforts to fit swing within the conservatory mold of high-culture music legitimated by what Krivda calls “its science.” As Eric Porter notes, many swing scholars view the genre as “emblematic of a democratizing ethos in American society and a more inclusive ideology of American exceptionalism that emanated from the New Deal and the antifascist Popular Front” (Porter 2001: 40). Swing ascended “as the result of changes in American thinking about race, class, cultural hierarchies, and other issues in the 1930s” (Porter 2001: 40). Swing was part of the disruption and transformation of cultural hierarchies in the 1930s. More recently, its category challenging energy has been contained in a search for legitimacy. This narrowing involves conforming to the terms of an established art music hierarchy by moving away from audience engagement and dancing.

Sound, Aural Sensitivity, Voice and Other Casualties of Institutional Respectability

When I say that Juilliard didn’t help me, what I mean is it didn’t help me
as far as helping me understand what I really wanted to play.
—Miles Davis (1989: 74)

One of the strategies adopted by proponents of jazz within academic institutions is, as David Ake argues, a “jazz has all of the things that classical music has” approach (Ake 2002: 119). This means that jazz in institutional spaces can make concessions to ideals from nineteenth-century Europe such as unity, development and harmonic complexity. Although legitimating jazz within these terms served as a resource for funding, it has also compromised jazz aesthetics. Much excellence in jazz history, as David Ake notes, “counters conservatory-based measures of excellence” (Ake 2002: 119). The standard of excellence is held up by the professional jazz community; this community sets its own standards, according to Paul Berliner. He argues that all aspiring jazz musicians face

the same basic challenge: to acquire the specialized knowledge upon which advanced jazz performance depends ... Traditionally, jazz musicians have learned without the kind of support provided by formal educational systems. There have been no schools or universities to teach improvisers their skills; few textbooks to aid them. Master musicians, however, did not develop their skills in a vacuum. They learned within their own professional community—the jazz community. (Berliner 1994: 35)

The specialized standards and skills developed within the professional community of jazz musicians face fundamental tensions in compromising with the norms of institutionalized European art ideals.

African American Cleveland musician Art Cherry explains the difference between non-college and college jazz as the difference between playing by ear and playing from written music:

A lot of schools in the Midwest area ... College perpetuates [not playing by ear], which is a complete contradiction of jazz history. It’s an aural tradition. It was meant to be taught aurally, but now everyone is using real books. They’re not using their ears. That’s why there’s a disconnect. College, unfortunately, perpetuates it.

Performing with written musical notation is a high priority in college jazz programs. This approach merges with an overemphasis on harmonic theory over individual expression:

It seems to put theory over actually [everything else] ... They're playing from theory and not from a sound ... which makes people like Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk ... You hear them play and they don't think G7, I'm going to do a tritone sub. They're thinking color-based ... It's like: I don't know what that's called, but ... playing a sound ... If you're playing from the blues, you're literally playing from the sound.

In this formulation, the divide between reading and listening is articulated not in terms of mutually exclusive camps, but in terms of what is emphasized within the learning process. Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk were endlessly inventive within harmonic paradigms. That being said, Cherry contends that this theoretical inventiveness was the result of a creative vision, not the cause of it. In this respect, many college programs put the cart before the horse. This corresponds with the elevated stature harmony maintains in European art music. Ake notes that given the high esteem in which classical musicians revere harmony, "it stands to reason that conservatories emphasize harmony ... centered musical instruction in their discussions of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven. It is less clear, however, why harmonic theory should predominate to the virtual exclusion of all else in jazz improvisation courses" (Ake 2002: 116). The idea of playing from a sound does not meld well with European standards or ideals, particularly because classical conservatories stress fixed tone-color as an ideal. A distinctive sound is an important part of history that fits unevenly within conservatory music departments.

European art-music standards excise timbral manipulation and playing a range of tone colors. Instead, they establish standards of steady timbre, centered intonation and standard vibrato. This precludes serious engagement with the history of idiosyncratic creativity in these subtle domains. David Ake writes that

so many important jazz musicians earned their reputations through distinctive, flexible, and oftentimes quite unorthodox “sounds.” Lester Bowie, Dewey Redman, Sidney Bechet, Ornette Coleman, Cootie Williams, Joe “TrickySam” Nanton, Miles Davis, and Bill Frisell represent only a few of the many instrumentalists who made their mark through their unique manipulations of timbre. (Ake 2002: 120)

Here is one domain where the standardized assumptions about approaching an instrument are incompatible with—and oblivious to—a rich, creative history in jazz. Meeting European ideals of an orthodox tone means excising a chunk of jazz history.

David Gates made a similar point about institutional jazz being linked to reading that is out of sync with jazz history:

It is interesting that ... if you look historically at the way jazz is taught ... we've turned it into academia. There's a formula in schools, in high schools and in colleges, when that was not originally how the music came up ... Again, it's hard to make generalizations along racial lines about that, but a lot of the white kids who are taking classical lessons, they're used to reading music off of a page. And so they sit down in jazz band and it's just reading more music off of a page. There's a different feel to it.

Here, big band jazz has been folded into a subset of classical reading practices. In this process, subtle rhythmic sensitivity is lost. There is no notational system that adequately captures the elusiveness of feel.

An overemphasis on reading also ill-prepares performers for the fleeting specificity of an individual performance. As ethnomusicologist Paul Berliner notes:

Musicians must be able to apprehend the unique features of each rendition as they unfold during a performance, instantly adapting their parts to those of other players. If the band takes exceptional liberties, individual players must continually alter their formal models of the piece as well. In the final analysis, a jazz piece is not a single model appearing in a fake book or on a recording. Rather, it is the precise version of a piece created by musicians at each performance event. (Berliner 1994: 94–95)

Similarly, Ingrid Monson notes that rhythm section players need to be fully attuned to other musicians with their ears:

The rhythm section is expected to continuously respond to changes in an improviser's solo. When members of the rhythm section miss opportunities to respond, they are often said to be "not listening" to what is going on in the ensemble. In other words, it is not enough for a musician to play through a tune with only its melody and harmonic structure in mind, as many jazz pedagogy books would have us believe; the player must be so thoroughly familiar with the basic framework of the tune that he or she can attend to what everyone else in the band is doing. (Monson 1996: 83)

Reading music can provide the melody and harmonic layout of a piece of music, but it cannot present musicians with the specific subtleties of an interactive, shifting sonic environment of the kind that occurs within jazz performances.

Honest Creativity in Sound vs. Rational Bureaucratic Forces

One recurrent theme in interviews about college jazz was that institutional training tends to have a homogenizing effect on musicianship. Rigid ideas of right and wrong replace more subtle aesthetic sensibilities. John James is a saxophonist in his late seventies. He has performed for years in LA, though he had recently returned to Cleveland to take care of his mother, who was one hundred years old. John James referred to this notion of "honesty" in sound, rather than reductive ideas of right and wrong:

One thing I found out about this music thing is there is no such thing as wrong, there's only where you didn't intend to put it. When you're dealing with the sound, it's not wrong. And another cat with a different ear could put it in the same place and make sense out of it ... It brings out the honesty.

Here, the honesty of live improvisational negotiation is threatened by codified academic frameworks. Academics are presented as conservative and as stifling creativity:

In academics, I'm noticing that ... they teach, and they doing a good job of teaching, some great musicians coming out. I'm not too sure they giving a clear

idea what it means to be creative. I think they got to take a lesson from life. You got to take chances ... if you don't know, to find out something else.

Whereas performing live jazz is a process of “find[ing] out something else,” academic jazz promotes stasis and re-creates the already known. Creativity is in “the way you live your life and hopefully you got a way to express it,” as opposed to what is taught with “the advent of Berklee [music college].” In this interview with James, college is constructed as a place separate from “the way you live your life.” Music from college instead emerges out of rational bureaucratic forces.

Other scholars point to institutional biases toward the written and measurable that exclude creative engagements with elusive qualities like “honesty in sound.” Bruno Nettl, for example, writes that to “Music Building society, the concept of musical notation is enormously important” (Nettl in Ake 2002). Approaches to music that emphasize skills outside this frame are likely to be baffling: “Music to Music Building society is *notated* music” (Nettl in Ake 2002: 120). Similarly, David Ake points to how established conservatory standards are not put in place to serve concepts like “playing a sound” or “honesty.” There is an institutional bias not only toward the written, but also toward the measurable:

Given that the written score is the document with which most conservatory-trained music teachers and department administrators are familiar, it seems almost inevitable that the focal points of “note choice” and harmony would carry over into jazz education. Notation and harmony-based improvisational theory suit classroom use: notes, chords, and harmonic progressions translate easily to paper, blackboard, and textbooks. And teachers can measure the students’ grasp of the materials “objectively” through written exams. (Ake 2002: 120–121)

Private teachers able to develop musicians who are concerned with the subtleties of rhythm and feel are not cost-effective for most institutions, particularly because music departments underfund jazz. By one measure from the College Music Society, the

number of oboe and bassoon teachers in US and Canadian institutions of higher education is greater than that of all jazz instructors combined (Ake 2002). Jazz is finding a limited foothold in the ivory tower, but its aesthetics may be suffering from a reorganization of musical priorities in the academic space. Ideals of justifying music by “physical response,” “feel,” “sound,” “listening” and “honesty” from the old school threaten to be eclipsed by the new school of “theory,” “harmony” and playing “right.”

Henry Kingsbury’s insights about the conservatory are helpful for thinking about jazz’s institutional meanings. In the conservatory model, there is an infrastructure of authority and prestige that validates individual expression. Higher education in jazz teaches a way to think about music. One of Kingsbury’s key insights is that musical talent does not simply exist. Instead, it is dependent on an authority to validate it. With regard to talent, it is something that is supposed to be a distinctive characteristic possessed by the student. However, only a teacher can identify and acknowledge its validity.

Autonomous individual expression doesn’t exist until one has negotiated this social terrain of prestige. In his synthesis of the argument, Simon Frith writes: “Truth-to-self, in other words, depends on others’ approval until (just as in the pop world) one reaches a sufficient level of success (in terms of both esteem and earnings)” (Frith 1998: 37). In this sense, the conservatory creates an audience distinct from a popular audience. It’s an elite credentialing audience that validates musical norms and is hidden behind the elite institution.

Legitimizing vs. Understanding

Maureen Mahon notes that academic politics shape what genres receive scholarly attention. She notes: “We may need to address disciplinary value systems that may still devalue work on popular and commercial music or question the validity of certain types of popular music as subjects for research” (Mahon 2014: 340). Some scholarship on jazz has played into disciplinary value systems in a way that shifts the meaning of jazz to Eurocentric aesthetic ideals. This work risks failing to understand jazz’s social function for audiences by focusing instead on validating it within established hierarchies. Legitimizing jazz in the academy has come at a cost. Rob Walser notes that “[p]revalent methods of jazz analysis, borrowed from the toolbox from musicology, provide excellent means for *legitimizing* jazz in the academy. But they are clearly inadequate to the task of helping us to *understand* jazz and to account for its power to affect many people deeply—issues that ought to be central for critical scholarship of jazz” (Walser 1993: 359). The difference between understanding jazz and legitimizing it has also been transposed onto the divides and fissures running through the Cleveland jazz scene.

Conclusion: Contradictions of College Jazz

How is “academic” defined? For many ... it’s clearly a pejorative word. You know, people who are cut off from the real world ... and pontificate from their ivory towers using words (that most of us don’t understand) to discuss issues (that most of us don’t recognize) while forcing their students to conform to criteria that most of us are disinterested in. And this caricature has nothing to do with my admittedly limited experience in the academic environment. What I see, daily, is a bunch of people, teachers and students, trying to figure stuff out. They do this in an engaged, critical, friendly, and passionate manner. Academic work in improvisation, in my neck of the woods, usually means a bunch of people improvising together, which makes it identical to non-academic work in improvisation.

—Guitarist Fred Frith (Frith in Chan 2007: 5)

In Cleveland, college jazz is embedded with contradictions. Partly, this is because there is disagreement as to whether it is part of the Cleveland jazz scene, or whether that scene occurs in clubs, churches and “the street.” On more than one occasion, the topic of college jazz arose during ethnographic interviews with musicians who had gone to college for jazz and taught in college jazz programs, but who nevertheless felt inclined to deride college jazz as uncool and untrustworthy. This paradox comes partly from the fact that it’s nearly impossible for straight-ahead jazz players to earn a living outside of a college’s institutional support.

There’s a music called jazz that pleases audiences in Cleveland. The institutionalization of a certain kind of jazz supports a certain kind of emotional politics; this emotional politics excludes the importance of contextualized affect that is rooted in black musical history and collective strategies for survival within black communities. In some instances, jazz musicians from “the street” bring that sensibility into institutional spaces and find much-needed support there (a support that may have been particularly needed because the urban planning tendencies of Cleveland’s business community typically neglect the social and economic needs of vulnerable populations). There is no common standard for what constitutes the meaning of jazz or its boundaries, even as jazz has been used to exemplify freedom. However, we may consider this question of freedom in the same terms Terry Eagleton uses to describe happiness and well-being: it’s an institutional affair. Freedom, like happiness, “demands the kind of social and political conditions in which you are free to exercise your creative powers” (Eagleton 2007: 87). From this angle, college jazz provides a limited freedom for some to play jazz, yet like the Cleveland charter schools (as one Cleveland public school and arts advocate told me),

it may abandon the public good for the larger purpose of “attracting middle-class people to the city.”

Ryan Jerving calls attention not to questions of either art or commerce, but to “social and historical questions of ‘how’: how to satisfy the demands of both art and commerce; how to improvise within the organizations, disciplinary conventions, and arrangements of the culture industries; how to take advantage of the opportunities as well as the limitations offered by the very ephemerality of the forms those industries made available” (Jerving 2004: 667). Though Jerving is writing here about the market, the same question of “how” might be applied to the academy and the streets. Because of the deep structures of racial inequality that shape Cleveland, the question of college jazz is not either/or but both/and, with an eye toward how jazz might teach institutions alternative epistemologies for reorganizing the institutional life of the city.

College Jazz, the People and the Ivory Tower: Either/Or or Both/And

Some leftist jazz cultural workers have constructed the academy as “the other” to “the people” represented by jazz. For example, Alex Dutilh stated that during French social movements in the 1960s and ’70s,

you were either militant and political and with the people, or against them. The editor of *Jazz Hot* was a very militant and politically interested person, and for that reason he was interested in the Black Panthers ... In the early 1970s you couldn’t be an intellectual and on the side of the people. The intellectual was the guy up in an ivory tower while people were dying in the street. A lot of the popularity of Free Jazz in France can be attributed to the fact that jazz was considered to be a marginalized music and not part of the establishment, more than to the music itself. So, for Anthony Braxton to affiliate himself with contemporary European music, which was then associated with the political right, was considered to be a mistake by a lot of people. (Dutilh in Lehman 2005: 42)

Here the radical politics of jazz emerged from its marginality. Institutions were viewed as

mainstream, and the music's distance from the ivory tower affirmed its solidarity with political militants. In this framework, "real jazz" and academia are mutually exclusive because jazz's very marginality is a marker of its political authenticity.

Unlike the political radicals at *Jazz Hot*, to whom entering the ivory tower was selling out the people, conservatory jazz professor Bill Dobbins positions academia as an important front in a social battle in which racial politics play out in the language of aesthetics. His 1988 article, "Jazz and Academia" states that within conservatories jazz musicians are "still often considered inferior or, at least, lowbrow" (Dobbins 1988: 31). He also saw derogatory terms such as "jazzier" playing out as "common currency even in institutions where jazz itself is believed to have attained true respectability" (Dobbins 1988: 31). Writing about academia's attitudes toward jazz, Dobbins states: "Before the late 1960's the words 'jazz' and 'academia' were generally assumed to be mutually exclusive" (Dobbins 1988: 30). He describes his experience at Ohio's Kent State University in the late '60s as "a constant struggle against just such an attitude" (Dobbins 1988: 30). During his student years, jazz students were kicked out of practice rooms, barred from using school instruments and generally deterred from playing jazz. It was only after the jazz ensemble he participated in received "highly visible praise and support from university student and administrative organizations" that the music school involved "itself, taking credit for musical developments which they had aggressively fought at every turn" (Dobbins 1988: 30). Throughout the rest of the article, Dobbins situates academic music as missing out on "several aspects of the jazz musician's discipline which are of great practical value to all aspiring musicians" (Dobbins 1988: 31). Here, he counters highbrow exclusion by pointing to how classical musicians are depriving

themselves. Dobbins suggests a number of jazz skills that would benefit classical musicians. He notes that in symphony music there is a tendency toward rubato, aperiodic rhythm and reliance on the conductor. Jazz education challenges musicians to develop a steady internal pulse and heighten rhythmic accuracy. Additionally, Dobbins asserts that classical musicians tend to forget theory, harmony and analysis after they have passed their exams. In jazz, the craft of improvisation demands that these ideas be creatively applied instead of forgotten. For Dobbins, jazz places a demand on aural sensitivity that could only enrich performers of Bach, Chopin and Ravel. Likewise, learning jazz demands that performers “personally earn the privilege of receiving the repertoire” through transcription and concerted effort (Dobbins 1988: 33). This stands in stark contrast to conservatory tendencies, which present musical information in “easily digestible fifty-minute segments,” valuing convenience over passion (Dobbins 1988: 33). Moreover, jazz, for Dobbins, demands that performers learn to play with “sympathetic interaction,” connection to everyday life and a higher sense of purpose than personal gain. Thus, he responds to the idea that jazz and academia are mutually exclusive with the position that jazz should be included in academia and can enhance the skills of all academically trained musicians. As a matter both of racial politics and general good sense, jazz can and should enrich academia.

The institutionalization of jazz did not destroy vital black community spaces, even though larger institutional politics, particularly urban renewal, were part of the fracturing of the black community. Rather than attempt to resolve this contradiction in urban Cleveland, contextualizing cultural support of jazz within larger institutional practices illuminates the paradoxical state in which college jazz exists in Cleveland. It is street

music in the academy, even as the academy is tied to an elite vision of Cleveland that often neglects the street. Thus, my argument is not only that college jazz *is* real jazz, following David Ake, but that institutions—including colleges—are real political players with real, contradictory racial politics. The black community jazz that could have existed in Cleveland haunts understandings of college jazz—along with the possibility that Cleveland institutions could function otherwise. Jazz musicians attuned to how jazz occurs both in the other Cleveland of black community spaces and the official Cleveland of cultural institutions demonstrate how the meanings of micro-aesthetic practices take on macro-political significance given the institutional history and geography of race. The politics of jazz in the conservatory is shadowed not only by the real aesthetics of the streets, but by the real inequalities of urban history.

In Cleveland, similar tensions exist between selling out the people or advancing racial politics through the institutionalization of jazz. It is not a simple task to heal the damage done by the root shock of urban renewal in disrupting black urban communal solidarities. That being said, the contradictions of macro-institutional inequality among institutions that have opened their musical canon cannot be fully understood without an understanding of urban renewal. College jazz represents both a key location where African American culture is receiving long overdue recognition *and* the failure of Cleveland to support a vital African American community.

CODA

“It Is What It Is”: Improvising in the Spaces That Are, Sounding Out What the Spaces Can Be

The redistribution of recognition for black cultural achievement in white spaces outpaces the redistribution of resources in the urban core. Jazz as art functions as an ambivalent marker of legitimacy for Cleveland jazz; it suggests a compromise of jazz’s values as emerging from the community, even as it serves as a marker of legitimacy. Yet this legitimacy is meager recompense for black people in a landscape in which crowding, displacement and poverty have been endemic.

The community-based black club scene haunts Cleveland jazz. This could be framed as a longing for the days when black people were more simply restricted in their housing choices, such that a coherent cross-class black community was forced to blossom. Yet the haunting of the community-based black club scene is also the memory of alternative possibilities; history did not have to happen the way it did. The sound of the old clubs is also an awareness that the present could sound different as well.

If Cleveland’s history had not been one defined by spatial containment, inequitable opportunities and displacement, the lines drawn in the jazz world would have more breathing room; aesthetic debates would not be pitched with such anxiety and defensiveness; performance choices would be less burdened by the contradictory needs of proving black cultural achievement and celebrating black cultural history. Jazz, the marvel of paradox, could be allowed more of its complexity—and debaters about jazz as art or entertainment could agree to have it both ways.

Alternate regimes of interdependent value and mutual creation are already here, enacted within the unequal city, improvising possibilities that have not been scripted in

advance. Jazz identities are always already shaped by structures of historically embedded spatialized race relations; this plays alongside jazz as an emblem for the circulation of creative agency, including the circulation of ways of transforming the structures that structure us.

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