

JAZZ IMPROVISATION AS SITUATED COGNITION:

HISTORICAL AND ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE MUSIC OF MILT JACKSON



A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
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23 DECEMBER 2017

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the life and music of vibraphonist Milt Jackson as a form of situated cognition. Situated cognition theory, or situated learning, argues for the ecological specificity of perception: namely that knowledge is situated in activity bound to social, cultural and physical contexts. My study brings such a perspective to mid-twentieth-century jazz practice with the view of bringing to the fore a certain cultural knowledge with regards to the practice and expression of jazz in the 1940s and 1950s, and to highlight important parts of its knowledge base as these are evident in the musical outputs of Jackson. First, I attempt to offer the first substantial historical account of Jackson's upbringing in Detroit, based on detailed archival research, and highlight some of the influential environments to which he was exposed. Typical of his generation, Jackson forged diverse musical influences into a personal sonic signature; in this development, the Detroit communities were highly instrumental.

In the analytical section I examine a selection of Jackson's recorded performances and identify the recurrence of stylistic devices, patterns and schemata, as well as perceived gesture, in his improvisations. My findings reveal a certain cultural knowledge with regards to the practice and expression of jazz in the 1940s and 1950s, and allow me to demonstrate that some of Jackson's performing strategies were culturally specific, historically contingent and predicated on statistical learning. My focus on examining choices made by Jackson and his peers in their use of musical language, as well as my subsequent emphasis on the recognition, transformation, and categorisation of musical material, has larger implications. Throughout, I engage with the notion of invented traditions and theories of cultural (collective) memories, and propose that a study of jazz in terms of concrete moves in forms of improvisation may help us understand how jazz improvisation is constantly redefined, and how different modes of relationships between past and present affect its performance practice. This methodology offers systematic analysis of embodied knowledge and experience, of imagined worlds, metaphors, allegories and the valuations of social significance and personal affect.

Acknowledgments

Although, as one of my favourite writers in jazz academia noted, the nature of this work often indicates that it has one author, it is in fact, and in several ways, the result of a range of relationships with colleagues, librarians, journalists, archivists and most importantly jazz musicians, spanning over five years, several academic institutions and locales. This thesis then bears many traces of its circumstances, but some deserve special praise. Above all, I am grateful to my principal supervisor Mervyn Cooke for his support during my PhD studies. From my first day at Nottingham I was on a path of working across disciplinary boundaries which he not only encouraged, but also set an excellent example by the interdisciplinary nature of his own work. I am also thankful to Lonán Ó Briain for his incisive comments and encouragement at various stages of this PhD. Conversations with both have always been helpful in developing, shaping and conveying ideas from my first year as a PhD student through the completion of this thesis.

For some inspiring conversations, I want to thank Philip Weller, whose imaginative thinking may inspire anyone's work regardless of their scholarly field. Discussions with Philip, most usually in the music department's kitchen, enriched my thoughts but also took me away from my narrow concerns, encouraging me to read further, listen harder, think again. It was Nicholas Baragwanath who introduced me to schema theory and encouraged me to consult scholarship that proved highly influential for the development of my ideas. I am thankful to him for the informal conversations during my first year of study and for his critical comments during my annual review process.

I feel blessed to have had fruitful relationships with many great musicians. I am particularly grateful to guitarist Ofer Landsbserg who offered valuable advice at various stages of my analytical work. I am also thankful to my teachers at the State University of New York, at Purchase. Many of the ideas I present here have been influenced from their excellent teaching during an artist diploma program in New York (2011-2012). I also need to acknowledge that this work is the immediate development of my MA thesis at King's College London. I am grateful for the time I spent at King's among inspiring scholars and colleagues.

The staff at the Dennis Arnold Music Library generously made resources available for me to consult during my research. I must also recognise the help of many librarians and archivists around the world whose dedication has allowed me to access information from places remote.

Through the years, I applied several times for PhD places but offers from Cambridge, King's College London and many more institutions never materialised due to the lack of funding, necessary to pursue doctoral studies. I am indebted to the University of Nottingham for the Vice Chancellor's Award for Research Excellence and to the Leventis Foundation for their doctoral scholarship; I would have never made it without their financial support.

Finally, the last three years have seen me move between houses, cities, countries, and live out of a cabin-bag-type luggage, in conditions far from ideal for a PhD candidate. Some recent experiences have pushed me to new limits. I am most grateful to those friends who offered me support, accommodation and/or a space to work during some otherwise difficult times. This thesis is for all of you.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Jazz Improvisation as Situated Cognition

This thesis examines the musical outputs of Milt Jackson in the 1940s and 1950s as a form of situated cognition. Situated cognition theory, or situated learning, posits that all knowing is inseparable from doing.[1] It argues that knowledge is situated in activity bound to social, cultural and physical contexts, noting the information which is modelled on and formed by interaction with a specific environment. At its simplest, situated cognition theory describes how individuals acquire skills, extending research on apprenticeships into how legitimate peripheral participation leads to membership in a community of practice. My study brings such a perspective to mid-twentieth-century jazz practice with the view of bringing to the fore a certain cultural knowledge with regards to the practice and expression of jazz, as well as to highlight important parts of its knowledge base as these are evident in the musical outputs of Jackson. Through Jackson, I present empirical evidence to argue that the knowledge structures underlying jazz improvisation were effectively culture-specific, historically contingent and predicated on statistical learning. I describe how activities and situations were integral to learning the jazz of the time, how the social environment coproduced knowledge and how learning and cognition were fundamentally situated.

Situated cognition is 'a many-splendored enterprise', as Philip Robbins and Murat Aydede explain; the result of developments in philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, and numerous developments across the humanities.[2] It is also a misunderstood term, partly because of an 'individualist conception of the mind and cognition' that became the status quo by the 1970s.[3] An understanding of cognition proposes that it is the process with which we acquire knowledge, through the senses, thought and experience:

> The cognitive system is not a computer, it is a dynamical system. It is not the brain, inner and encapsulated; rather, it is the whole system comprised of the nervous system, body and environment. The cognitive system is not a discrete sequential

[1] John Seely Brown, *et al.*, 'Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning', *Educational Research* 18, no. 1 (1989), 32-42.

[2] Philip Robbins and Murrat Aydede, 'A Short Primer on Situated Cognition', in *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition*, ed. Philip Robbins, and Murat Aydede (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3.

[3] Robert A. Wilson and Andy Clark, 'How to Situate Cognition: Letting Nature Take Its Course', in *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition*, ed. Philip Robbins, and Murat Aydede (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 55.

> manipulator of static representational structure; rather, it is a structure of mutually and simultaneously influencing change. Its processes do not take place in the arbitrary, discrete time of computer steps; rather, they unfold in the real time of ongoing change in the environment, the body, and the nervous system. The cognitive system does not interact with other aspects of the world by passing messages or commands; rather it continuously coevolves with them.[4]

This formulation highlights three strains of research that have proved to be particularly important for the situated cognition thesis and are implicit in the present thesis. First, as Robbins and Aydede note, cognition does not rely only on mental contrasts but also on the body (embodiment). Second, cognitive activity uses structure in the natural and social environment (the embedding thesis). The many sensory modalities involved interact with the dynamic events in the world around us. Third, cognition extends beyond the boundaries of individual organisms (the extension thesis).[5]

I will not proceed with a stock-packing of ideas, explaining further what is situated cognition or how it has developed as it would be a misplaced goal here, nor do justice to the work that follows. Of particular importance to the present study is that situated cognition theory argues that cognition both stems from and generates the activities of individuals in specific environments. I adopt this stance to examine the music of Jackson, beginning with his upbringing in Detroit, the immensely influential cultural settings to which he was exposed during those formative years, his subsequent move to New York and his cultural work along pioneers in jazz music. The chief contribution of this thesis is therefore the study of Jackson's life and music, offering historical and analytical perspectives of his musical outputs. I concentrate on the 1940s and 1950s partly because his style did not evolve after this intensely creative period; also, because later in the twentieth century other developments defined jazz, most of which Jackson did not follow. In so doing, I attempt to gain a historically informed picture of his upbringing, emphasising the complexity that defined his background and was representative of many African American artists, but also making a more general argument about the cultural determinacy of musical structures and how these offer an alternative mode of examining jazz music broadly.

First, my works lays out some of the matters to which this thesis responds. Chapter two surveys important developments in jazz studies, in which I stress the absence of influence of analytical models from the practical perspective of the performing musician. I

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[4] Timothy van Gelder and Robert F. Port, 'It's About Time: An Overview of the Dynamical Approach to Cognition', in *Mind as Motion: Explorations in the Dynamics of Cognition*, ed. Robert F. Port, and Timothy van Gelder (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 3.

[5] Robbins and Aydede, 'A Short Primer on Situated Cognition', 3.

locate this gap, among others, in the absence of influence of feminist epistemology, so obvious in the twentieth century, in jazz studies. Having offered an insight into some of the matters that occupy jazz studies, in chapter three I discuss Jackson's upbringing. In so doing I attempt to situate his childhood in the social world he inhabited as a developing artist, highlighting some of the activities that the young Jackson was engaged in and the cultural contexts known to have influenced him. Detroit-born Jackson was brought up amid the depths of the Great Depression, at a time when Detroit was most socially charged. The city would eventually erupt in the race riot of 1943, when Jackson was twenty years old and in emerging adulthood: this phase has been explained as 'a distinct period demographically, subjectively, and in terms of identity explorations'.[6] In locating Jackson's music in relation to this spectrum of cultural forces, I also explore Jackson's formation in his school, Miller High. The school reflected the combination of dynamic growth and social negotiations that occupied Detroit in the 1930s (detailed in later chapters) and, although it was caught up in a reform programme in music that did not favour African American students and immigrants, it produced an astonishingly high number of respected jazz artists. I conclude my study of Jackson's biography with an examination of the music scene in Detroit, offering a historical perspective of some of the bands that played the city until the 1940s. This is followed by an urban tour of the city's music scene as this may have been experienced by the young vibist.

As well as attempting to offer the first substantial historical account of Jackson's formation in Detroit, this thesis also examines how Jackson's music evolved through selected recordings. Although my analysis engages with music which I consider important, the aim is larger than the veneration of the specific musical examples. Through this thesis, I intend to demonstrate the wider significance of some stylistic devices in determining jazz styles. In chapter five, therefore, I examine some of Jackson's early improvisations, situating his musical outputs within a web of music produced by Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, Lucky Thompson and others. I also discuss problems of jazz historiography, concentrating on issues of the jazz tradition. The focus on certain of Jackson's recorded performances assess his strategies of melodic invention as reflective of the 1940s-modernist style and emphasize his pedigree in bebop. Jackson's cultural work reflected the specific times in which he lived and his work remained rooted in the music of the 1940s and 1950s. Through an examination and discussion of certain aspects of the individual inner logic of his improvisations, I attempt to position Jackson both as an acolyte

[6] Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, 'Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development from the Late Teens Through the Twenties', *American Psychologist* 55, no. 5 (2000), 469–80.

of bebop's pioneers as well as an innovator on his instrument, the vibraphone. In so doing, I hope to contribute to the understanding of Jackson's processes of melodic construction but also of the depth of the creative palette for the jazz of the time.

In chapter six I continue my analytical work by forming a theory of musical schemata for the jazz of the time as this is evident in Jackson's recordings. I concentrate on Jackson's usage of the related diminished, explaining how this mode of musical thought provides a plausible explanation for several stylistic devices of the time. My discussion of Jackson's music within this milieu aims to demonstrate not only the vibist's embrace of contemporaneous jazz, but also the cultural knowledge that constituted bona fide understanding for improvising musicians. I argue that Jackson's embrace of this knowledge played an important role in elevating him to the forefront of the modernist jazz movement. In this context, my study will contribute to the understanding of some of the parameters that defined Jackson's construction of melodic lines, especially within the context of memory and somatic means of musical (re)production. This is followed by a study of gesture in Jackson's improvisations that examine his forward phrasing and apparent motion in music. I build on this discussion in chapter seven, focusing on issues of sonic identity and discuss Jackson's blues mask. My analysis interrogates perceptions of what exactly is 'black in blue' in Jackson's music, trying to understand why certain sounds continue to evoke the blues without an apparent reason, as well as why these blues sonorities in themselves continue to signal African American experience.

To clarify the aims of my thesis, it may be helpful to say what I am not attempting to do. The ideas presented here do not offer a thorough explanation of the perceived gesture, or motion, in Jackson's music. Nor do I claim that the ideas about patterns and schemata allow for a complete understanding of Jackson's music. The vibist's improvisations, for example, contain a speech-like quality which could form a thesis on its own. My focus on the 'language' of jazz that Jackson communicated with his colleagues only attempts to highlight the importance of the shared cultural knowledge for jazz of the time, as well as the need for more work to be conducted on this front. In many ways, the discussion may seem fragmented. Indeed, it must be because it is only through this process of examining some of the individual elements in Jackson's music first that we may be able to assemble the pieces that make the mosaic of his performances. The decision to leave out much of the music is therefore a strategic one. I start my analysis in chapter five with a discussion of simple embellishments and conventional patterns that repeat in Jackson's early improvisations, hoping to show how Jackson fits into a larger picture of jazz practice; or, as David Huron

argued, how, for Jackson, auditory learning was dominated by statistical exposure.[7] Furthermore, although I have been engaged as a performer with transcribing and reproducing some of these examples, this thesis does not adopt a performer-centred approach. I acknowledge that perceived musical motion and jazz language are inextricably intertwined with physical motion in the production of this music, which I briefly discuss in chapter five, but I recognise that I do not engage with this important field of research. As much as I describe Jackson's learning of jazz conventions, it is mostly the physical element of performing music that accounts for the originality of his creations, primarily his innovation in sound.

I suspect that readers might also want to question the absence of a more detailed and self-reflexive engagement with issues of historical narrative and strategies of storytelling in the first part of this thesis. The biographical section attempts to provide a thorough account of Jackson's upbringing (highlighting the importance of his social settings and influences), but I acknowledge that a more critical engagement is necessary, a distillation of all this research, if you will, to reach a better understanding of how the vibist fits into the larger picture. My account provides only the start for more work to be conducted on this seminal jazz figure and does not fully interrogate the ways in which other narratives and histories relate to Jackson's story, to uncover its ideologies. For example, although much remains to be written about the Modern Jazz Quartet, the iconic chamber-jazz ensemble Jackson fronted for more than four decades and his main gig for the largest part of his career, this thesis will have little to contribute to the history of the legendary group. Although references to the MJQ will be made where necessary, in this thesis I will concentrate instead on those non-MJQ collaborations that allowed Jackson to further his art by embodying a fuller exploration of his roots in ways other than the MJQ did, as well as highlight some characteristics of his playing that, while undoubtedly implied in the context of the quartet, were perhaps not thrown into such stark relief. In the next section I offer a brief exegesis as to why I chose not to discuss Jackson's work with the MJQ, highlighting the fact that most of the discussion on Jackson's work almost always focuses on his work within the context of the group.

As Christopher Coady rightly notes, scholars, much to our disappointment, cannot mind-read. We can, however, embrace the complexity of our subjects under investigation and tell stories that query existing paradigms in jazz, questioning long held beliefs about much-

[7] David Huron, *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation*, (Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006), 72.

loved music.[8] One may argue that the cultural significance of specific aspects of Jackson's music may be certain from the onset, but why this is the case is not so clear. Effacing subtle differences among participants to form boundaries that allow improvising musicians to fit into distinct categories has been a method all too familiar in jazz; one that does not allow the voices to be heard of some individuals whose characteristics have, for whatever reasons, never fitted easily into a particular category. It serves us well to remind ourselves that multiple conceptions of jazz are simultaneously in play and that digging deeper into the music, recognising similarities among practitioners and observing more localised changes, naturally allows one to point at differences among practitioners too; which, in turn, silence representations of an imagined group (bebop, cool, fusion) to gain critical weight. In this spirit of intellectual current, Ajay Heble has called attention to the ways in which 'populations have suffered from having their histories and identities defined and (mis)represented by dominant social orders'.[9]

For this reason, in this thesis I attempt to highlight the complexity of Jackson's story and to discuss his cultural work, as Nicholas Pillai puts it in a similar context, not in separation from the world around it but, rather, as a force within it.[10] The careful study of the historical worlds from which Jackson emerged allows me to offer a more complex view of the music's syncretic nature in terms of performance practices, and to illuminate some of the myriad forces that have influenced Jackson's development and subsequent musical outputs. Discussing Jackson in this vein also allows me to situate his improvisations not only at a specific historical moment and within a closed circle of pioneering musicians, but to highlight important ways with which improvisation became meaningful to participants. Of particular importance to my methods is my attempt to situate my methodology closer to their practice as musicians, which makes it permissible to imagine some of the means with which this insider, cultural knowledge was exchanged. In this vein, and in concluding this opening statement, I want to quote from an article that saw the light during the first year of my PhD studies, where I noted that 'it is important to ponder the fact that Jackson's musical processes inhabit a musical world from which we cannot separate ourselves, and that musicians of his

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[8] Christopher Coady, *John Lewis and the Challenge of "Real" Black Music* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 23.

[9] Ajay Heble, *Landing on the Wrong Note: Jazz, Dissonance and Critical Practice.* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), 235.

[10] Nicholas Pillai, *Jazz as Visual Language: Film, Television, and the Dissonant Image* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 3.

calibre constantly remind us that one must not forget to *listen* [emphasis in original]'.[11] Jackson's diachronic music invites us to an experience of precariously mounting complexity; we need to pay close attention to what the music has to say to us in synchronic terms.

1.2 Why Milt Jackson?

Walter Milt Jackson is a musician of special importance in jazz. Not only did he expand the technical boundaries of his instrument, the vibraphone, but his strategic positioning in the rapidly changing jazz scene of New York in the 1940s makes him a pivotal figure in the study of this music. Jackson's schooling in Detroit, one of the most important feeders of the New York jazz scene, in the advent of jazz as popular music and, subsequently, his tenure with some of the core practitioners of what we customarily refer to nowadays as bebop, place him at a point of musical intersection in jazz. Although commentators may still disagree on whether bebop was a revolutionary or an evolutionary style, the fact is that, in the long 1940s, jazz changed in both music and social worlds, and at a fast pace: whilst bebop musicians became known for their opposition to the white-dominated American super-culture and endorsed a path of pride for the advancement of the African American arts, their music opposed the musical status quo of popular swing music and Broadway entertainment.[12] As Guthrie Ramsey notes, bebop musicians satisfied modernist ideals of 'musical complexity' whilst situating their music in 'black Atlantic musical traditions'.[13] Similarly, Jackson's persona reflected powerful connections to African American communal values. His improvisations, compositions and records were permeated by the desire to create music of contemporary relevance to the 1940s as well as music that might expand its frontiers within that jazz aesthetic.

Several reasons have motivated my decision to base my work on Jackson. Aside from the fact that Jackson entered the jazz scene at a point of musical intersection, between popular swing and bebop, his music is ideally suited for an interpretation of improvisatory practice. First, aside from my appreciation of his music, Jackson stands as a *locus classicus* in the vibraphone lineage. Second, spanning some sixty years his career was closely associated with the core practitioners of jazz of the 1940s, such as Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie,

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[11] Alexander Gagatsis, 'Bags Still Grooves: Performance Strategies in Milt Jackson's Improvisations', *Jazz Perspectives* 9, no. 2 (2015), 150.

[12] Mark Slobin, *Subculture Sounds: Micromusic of the West* (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1993).

[13] Guthrie P Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell: Black Genius, Jazz History, and the Challenge of Bebop* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2013), 129.

whose influence is still ubiquitous. Consequently, Jackson's music not only embodies bebop, which is essential to understanding and performing jazz, but, as will become apparent, is often treated as an expansion of the style. Third, close examination of Jackson's discography on the one hand, and his music's contemporary reception as revealed by archival research on the other, together contribute to supplying a hitherto missing link between 'early' and 'modern' performing practices in jazz.

Numerous extra-musical factors also make Jackson an important subject for study. As these brief introductory comments may suggest, Jackson's aesthetic and music have been historically correlated with his racial identity, offering new avenues for exploration. In this respect, the Modern Jazz Quartet embraced a discourse that challenged static depictions of blackness. The group signalled a significant cultural shift in the reception of jazz and African American musicians and its importance in drawing audiences to the attention of jazz music has been highlighted in many occasions. Will Friedwald, for example, commented that the MJQ produced 'the most successful mixture of composition and improvisation in all of music, the longest-lived and most consistently excellent small group in jazz, and the most satisfying fusion of jazz and European classical music ever achieved.'[14] But in the context of the quartet, legend has it that Jackson's relationship with John Lewis, the pianist and artistic director of the group, was that of uncomfortable bedfellows due to the musical director's understatements of the African Americanness of jazz as portrayed by the ensemble. Commentators of the time saw it as symbolic for it was central to the historic-cultural issues of the era and the quartet came to represent a circumstance where behavioural and moral matters were contested in the African American community.

Most importantly, Jackson maintains the curious duality of representing both 'an ideal informant' in ethnography, as well as what Malcolm Gladwell describes as an 'outlier' in jazz historiography; that is to say an exceptional figure whose experience and abilities are significantly different from those of his peers.[15] Jackson was, significantly for my purpose in this thesis, a member of a musical community that followed the path of others; of the innovative figures known to have shaped the basic narrative of jazz's history as it is broadly understood, while being acknowledged as a musician of exceptional ability, the well-known 'genius' of 'the great men' story. 'This awkward canonical relationship,' Ken Prouty notes,

[14] Will Friedwald, 'The Modern Jazz Quartet: Form and Re-Form', *Downbeat* 52, no. 2 (February 1985), 23.

[15] Ken Prouty, 'Searching for Charles Johnson: The Outlier and the Ordinary in Jazz', *Popular Music and Society* 37, no. 5 (2013), 596.

> is predicated on an unmistakably individualist approach to jazz improvisation […], in terms of playing ability, musical intellect, and creative innovation, while also providing a basis from which we can extrapolate knowledge about entire communities and stylistic movements in the broadest possible terms.[16]

And yet, in the corpus of literature devoted to jazz and percussion music, Jackson is seldom mentioned except from brief bibliographical entries and reference to his skills, as well as his importance to the Modern Jazz Quartet. To date, writings about Jackson—one of jazz's most celebrated melodists—have remained limited in scope, mostly taking the form of brief commentaries of transcriptions of his solos and without reference to their historical context. Even in the popular press, Jackson didn't occupy the critics' attention much outside his involvement with the 'Baroque-type music', as the vibist himself observed, of the Modern Jazz Quartet.[17] The available commentaries often recycle similar information and, as a result, Jackson 'invariably emerges as an elusive, almost shadowy figure, neither properly placed, nor suitably canonized,' as Richard Palmer noted.[18] In the same article, Palmer rightly pointed out that Jackson's instrument was also partly responsible for not attracting enough attention from the public. Pressed on this point by Don DeMicheal for *Downbeat* in July 1961, Jackson shrugged and noted 'I guess they just forgot about me'.[19]

In 1956, André Hodeir wrote one of the few critical reviews of Jackson's music, though this demonstrated a degree of bias in favour of Jackson's MJQ work.[20] With respect to musical analysis, Steve Rehbein and Anita Clark discussed a selection of Jackson's improvisations, whilst a DMA thesis by Patric Roulet included a comprehensive discography, biographical commentary, and a discussion of Jackson's most popular composition, 'Bags Groove', accompanied by musical examples.[21] Short articles and interviews occasionally made their way into percussion journals and music magazines as well, some of which are

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[16] Ibid., 599.

[17] Ben Page, 'Open Bags: An Interview with Milt Jackson.', *Downbeat* (30 April 1970 Apr 30), 18.

[18] Richard Palmer, 'Milt Jackson Revisited Part I', *Jazz Journal International* 39, no.5 (May 1986): 8.

[19] Don DeMicheal, 'Jackson of the MJQ', *Downbeat* 28, no. 14 (July 1961), 19. The lack of discussion on Jackson has also been noted in A Woodfin, 'Milt Jackson: Bags Opus', *The Jazz Review* 2(1959 Oct), 38.

[20] André Hodeir, 'Bag's Microgroove: The Recorded Works of Milt Jackson', in *The André Hodeir Jazz Reader*, ed. Jean-Louis Pautrot (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2006).

21 Steve Rehbein, 'An Examination of Milt Jackson's Improvisational Style', *Jazz Research Papers* xi(1991).; Anita Clark, 'A Stylistic Analysis of Milt Jackson Through Transcription and Analysis of Fifteen Improvised Solos: A Project Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Course 'Jazz Styles and Analysis'', (1975).) Anita Clark, 'The Style of Milt Jackson', *Downbeat* 47, no. 7 (Jul 1980).; Patrick Roulet, 'Milt Jackson: The Creative Genius Behind Bags' Groove', (DMA diss., University of Washington, 2002). Revised in Patrick Roulet, 'Milt Jackson and Bags Groove', *Percussive Notes* 41, no. 1 (2003).

readily available; but, given their nature, their content is mostly descriptive.[22] Perhaps not surprisingly, given Jackson's popularity in the Continent, some of the most refreshing work on the vibist seems to have been written in Europe, as Palmer's take on Jackson attests. Palmer authored a total of six articles on Jackson for the *Jazz Journal,* addressing a range of issues such as historicity, the vibraphone, Jackson as a bop disciple, and the role of the vibist in-and-out of the MJQ.[23] In addition, Thomas Owens wrote his Masters dissertation on the MJQ and at a later stage contributed a critical review of the group's fugal pieces, Wolfram Knauer's doctoral thesis also focused on the MJQ, and Carla Marie Rupp's Masters dissertation discussed some important presentational aspects of the group.[24] More recently, Christopher Coady's work addressed the MJQ fugues and, by examining larger socioeconomic circumstances, the author framed Lewis's work in a middle-upper class African American ethos.[25]

Palmer wrote of Jackson as 'not just jazz's foremost vibist: that has been unquestionably true for so long that it is a boring remark, hard worth bothering to say. He is […], one of jazz's greatest musicians who just happens to play the vibraharp [vibes]'.[26] And yet, today, sixty years after Jackson's comment highlighting the absence of interest in his work outside the MJQ, it is important to note that no biography has ever been published on Jackson. While the vibist began writing his autobiographical notes and aimed to publish something like Dizzy Gillespie's *To Be or Not to Bop*, neither this nor any other book-length study of him has ever appeared. In this thesis, while my efforts consider the work of all the above-mentioned authors, most importantly, I attempt to bring out the 'voice' of Jackson through the interviews that I have collected through sustained archival research. The information that I present is otherwise assembled from the few published sources on Jackson,

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[22]Andy Watson and Brian Murphy, 'Milt Jackson's Solo Interpretations of Bag's Groove', *Percussive Notes* 25, no. 5 (1987). Richard Domek, 'Things to Come: An Analysis of Milt Jackson's Solo', *Percussive Notes* 33, no. 3 (June 1995). Rick Mattingly, '1996 PAS Hall of Fame: Milt Jackson', *Percussive Notes* 34, no. 6 (December 1996), 66.

[23] The *Jazz Journal* (1943-1977) was renamed as *Jazz Journal International* (1977-2009) and back into *Jazz Journal* since then; all volumes are available through the publishers' archives.

[24] Thomas Owens, 'Charlie Parker: Techniques of Improvisations (Vol. I & II)', (PhD diss., University of California, 1974); Thomas Owens, 'The Fugal Pieces of the Modern Jazz Quartet', *Journal of Jazz Studies* 4(1976). Wolfram Knauer, *Zwischen Bebop und Free Jazz: Komposition und Improvisation des Modern Jazz Quartet* (Schott, 1990) [originally presented as the author's doctoral thesis under the title: *Das Modern Jazz Quartet* (Universität Kiel, 1989)]; Carla Marie Rupp, 'Respectability and the Modern Jazz Quartet: Some Cultural Aspects of Its Image and Legacy as Seen Through the Press', (Masters diss., The City College of New York, 2010).

[25] Christopher Coady, 'Ellington in the Third Stream: A New Perspective on the Fugal Works of the Modern Jazz Quartet', *Jazzforschung* 41(2009); Coady, *John Lewis and the Challenge of "Real" Black Music*.

[26] Palmer, 'Milt Jackson Revisited Part II', 16.

which are of variable quality.[27] As part of my research, I have contacted the Jackson Estate with regards to the vibist's autobiographical notes, but his executors did not wish to share any information on their content and suggested that they have plans for publishing them. One of Jackson's past colleagues informed me that Jackson was composing those notes with the help of a professional biographer. Alas, Jackson's autobiographical notes remain hidden from public view some twenty years after his death.

1.3 A Note on Transcriptions of Recorded Music

A number of transcribed examples of recorded jazz solos are cited in the text, all of which (unless stated otherwise) have been prepared by the present author. The purpose of the transcriptions in this thesis is twofold: first, notated examples help me to make a point at a glance and facilitate the reader's understanding of the analytical observations that I convey. Second, in the analytical process, the transcriptions have been a guiding tool that has allowed me to reproduce one aspect of the recorded performance. While it is impossible to bring ourselves into proximity to the physical space at the time when these performances took place some seventy years ago, reproducing one aspect of these performances (the improvised solo) allows one to better understand some of its features. In similar vein, Travis Jackson has identified 'discernible but interrelated registers of meaning in jazz performance', one of which is accessible through one's engagement with the musical event.[28] One here interprets a musical event by attending to musical sound and physical activity, in addition to consideration of the matters that give meaning to this music (jazz as metaphor, cultural important activity and as a transcendent musical event). This form of interactive aural analysis has been at the centre of jazz pedagogy since the recorded medium was popularised. In this thesis, the process of transcribing those examples has helped me to internalise some of the particularities of Jackson's playing. Playing back these examples myself on the vibraphone has informed my understanding of the physical requirements of performing those solos on the instrument, allowing me to make specific observations with regards to its kinaesthetic demands and bringing to the fore the stylistic devices that they entail. The rehearsal of some of the lines that I discuss also brought to the surface some hidden properties with regards to the theoretical substance, which I highlight where appropriate.

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[27] In an interview with Jon Faddis, Jackson says that his autobiographical notes would be entitled, *Bags Groove*. He comments on the format of the volume ('something along the lines of Gillespie's autobiography') in an interview with Brian Harker. Jon Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', in *Downbeat: The Great Jazz Interviews*, ed. Frank Alkyer and Ed Enright (New York: Hal Leonard, 2009), 301.

[28] Travis Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away: Performance and Meaning on the New York Jazz Scene* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2012), 166.

Written representations of jazz solos are not new to jazz scholarship, or in fact the jazz art. Transcriptions have been used for decades, as the following anecdotal passage about Doc Cheathman, an early New Orleans trumpeter, testifies:

> A case in point is Doc Cheatham's response to Bobby Hackett's recorded solo on 'Jada.' Cheatham asked himself, 'How can a man play like that on that melody? … What is he thinking about? How could he think of something like that? Ultimately, Cheatham's transcription and analysis revealed to him the concept of 'alternate chords.'[29]

In the above formulation transcriptions are concerned with more textual information: harmony, phrasing tempo and so forth.[30] Western music notation, as in this thesis, provides readers with what Trevor Wishart has described as a two-dimensional lattice of data (pitch and rhythm); three if one considers the limited reference to timbre.[31] As in a similar context Michael Clarke observes: 'the data are striated, in distinct steps, and the fundamental musical events are discrete, so exact data about a set of discrete events are for the most part unambiguously available on paper'.[32] There are issues about how to represent these note groupings together, as is evident in later sections of this thesis where I discuss Jackson's phrasing. For example, as Jackson's playing developed and technologies better captured his performances, the vibist's melodic lines and the way their spectral content was shaped over time are dauntingly difficult to transcribe. The musical shape of his lines might arise from changes in the density and quality of the texture and variations in the speed of such changes. These are impossible to capture on a score or, indeed, put into words. This problem reminds me not only of the limits of music transcriptions, but also of the prose representation of the interviews I have listened to (audio or audio-visual recordings, or live) as part of my research: the timbres and tones of the voices are missing as well as the rhythmic cadences in the speech patterns; the expressive body language punctuating the stories and the playfulness with which these stories were articulated.

For Daniel Leech-Wilkinson the lack of vocabulary to discuss sound both results in and is symptomatic of a lack of perception. We often don't notice sound very much when we listen to music. He notes that those of us trained so thoroughly that we can write

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[29] Scott DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1997), 104-05.

[30] Musicians who wish to imitate the phrasing and timbre of their idols would reproduce the sound from the recording rather than the score.

[31] Trevor Wishart, *On Sonic Art* (York: Imageneering Press, 1985), 15-18.

[32] Michael Clarke, 'Analysing Electroacoustic Music: An Interactive Aural Approach', *Music Analysis* 31, no. 3 (2012 Dec 10), 348.

knowledgeably about music tend to hear it, instead, in terms of the categories in which we've been taught to think of music—melody, harmony, variation, development, and so on—all things that can be seen relatively easily in a score.[33] There have been times during my research that all I would search for when listening to music were patterns, schemata, and any coordination I could identify with: information necessary for the completion of this thesis. The precise ways in which those categories are presented in a performance, and the quality of sound at any moment, are usually things to which we pay less attention. Consequently, although it may seem self-evident, we tend to forget that a piece of music may also be the sensual experience of hearing it. A key problem that has made jazz performances hard to think of studying other than as notated score or as social medium has been exactly this problem of talking about music as sound. A performance cannot not simply be represented as pitches and durations notated in a score. Most details of a sequence of sounds cannot be specified in existing notations; yet these characteristics may inform our understanding of it. As Leech-Wilkinson observes, 'if a notation capable of specifying every detail were developed, no human performer would be able to realise it'.[34] And yet those details do play an essential role in how jazz music was perceived, which in turn feeds back, as we shall see, into how the solos were performed.

The transcriptions in this thesis, like (one may argue) all transcriptions of performed music, are descriptive not prescriptive. To paraphrase Jeffrey Magee, my transcriptions of the recorded examples that I refer to include voices and indications that I have deemed necessary to illustrate a point; they cannot be played with the expectation of recreating the original sound.[35] In other words, transcribing music is a process of interpretation and translation.[36] My methodology in notating those examples has been to transcribe the 'attack' of the performer on the instrument and only the fundamental information. While transcriptions produce documents that are understandable for literate musicians, they run the risk of portraying the performance more coherently than may be appropriate and remain a selective

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[33] Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performances* (2009), 1.1 Musicology and Performances, paragraph 8: http://www.charm.kcl.ac.uk/studies/chapters/intro.html, (accessed 24 July 2017).

[34] Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, 1.1 Musicology and Performances, paragraph 7.

[35] Jeffrey Magee, *The Uncrowned King of Swing: Fletcher Henderson and Big Band Jazz* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 10.

[36] For literature concerning the problem of transcribing music see Peter Winkler, 'Writing Ghost Notes: The Poetics and Politics of Transcription', in *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinarity, Culture*, ed. David Schwartz, *et al.* (Chalottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1997). Cited in David Marquiss, 'The Fingerpicking Guitar Tradition: Historical and Analytical Perspectives', (PhD diss., King's College London, 2016).

process subjected to the analyst's ability for cleaning up messy information. My transcriptions are in effect a tool to communicate certain information relevant to the performances and not designed to examine music as a static object inscribed on a piece of paper. Reference needs be made back also to the recording. At its most basic, returning to the music itself provides a means of aurally referencing specific passages in Jackson's solos. In my transcriptions, this is usually done by giving bar numbers, time codes, and by providing a music example within the text. Such referencing is vital in relating the commentary to the music. Since verbal descriptions and visual representations of music cannot be read and heard from the page and are also inadequate at presenting in detail the musical events, aural referencing is all the more important. Returning to my earlier comment about an interactive approach – between the recorded performance, the transcription and the instrument – I adopt a methodology that makes more use of the medium of the music itself alongside text and diagrams where appropriate, to help resolve many of the problems reoccurring in musical analysis of jazz solos. This is not only a matter of the presentation: given the limitations of transcriptions, one needs tools that are able to interact with the sound in flexible ways to make the analytical assessments in the first place.

The examples are extracted from fuller transcriptions. To readers I hope they will serve to highlight certain points that might be ignored or felt subconsciously, and as an encouragement to explore some of Jackson's vast discography. I have attempted to limit the examples to audio material that is available online (e.g. YouTube) so that readers can access the music, although on some occasions this hasn't always been possible. The time codes (e.g. 1:38) refer to the complete recording under consideration, while the bar numbers refer only to Jackson's solo and not the entire recorded performance. For example, 'bar 1' of any transcription refers to the beginning of Jackson's solo at the start of the corresponding chorus and not to the start of the performance. Where appropriate, Jackson's melodic lines that lead into the first bar of the chorus are not numbered but instead I refer to this phenomenon as a 'pick up' and 'pick up bars' accordingly. Lastly, the transcriptions are not intended for reproduction, reprint or any performance; it is advised that use of these scores for profit- or non-profit performances is prohibited, and any reproduction of music should be authorised by the copyright holder.

1.4 About the Recorded Medium

It is serendipitous for my purposes that as I am writing a section devoted to the jazz recording, we are approaching 2017 and an important milestone for jazz. I refer of course to

the centenary of what are customarily known as the first jazz recordings, made in February 1917 by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band.[37] Ever since, the recorded medium has been of fundamental importance to jazz. One may argue that jazz is coterminous with and inextricably linked to the history of radio and recording technology; many examples in jazz history validate this with Benny Goodman's story being, perhaps, the most widely shared. Quite simply, as Prouty notes, 'the role of recorded music simply cannot be overemphasised in any discussion of learning jazz since its emergence from the local New Orleans scene in the early 1920s.'[38] Indeed, no matter how deeply we look for folk roots in jazz, we cannot escape the mediating presence of the culture industry. Today recordings are invaluable both for a sustainable economy that provides the chance for the financial survival of musicians. Airplay promises an artist critical acceptance, popularising their musical outputs to a mass audience and establishing their marketability on the performance circuit. Recordings, regardless of how they are transmitted, are also the dominant mode of reception for jazz music worldwide and important for their community-building function. Not only did jazz and recording technology develop in tandem: to improvising musicians, recordings also proved instrumental in popularising the music because they offered the possibility to listen to a musical section repeatedly, to isolate certain passages and analyse them in a way that was absent before the existence of this technology.[39]

In broader terms, recording and the phenomenon of repeated listening have had a complex effect on music. Repeated listening enables us to grasp performative and textural nuances that may otherwise go unnoticed, allowing comparative studies and to ask questions about the music; expanding the repertory of analyses itself. The increasing academic interest in jazz recordings is evident in the critical respectability that jazz has gained within musicology since the mid-1980s. Recordings serve as documents of critical analysis and are subjected to close readings which, as in this thesis, motivate historical questions about changes in jazz over the past century, as well as critical questions about jazz in American culture. Recordings have also altered our perception of what constitutes a musical work and, by providing a storage medium for performance practice and composition, they have changed the nature of the accepted notions of musical creativity and what constitutes a jazz

[37] As most jazz historians understand, however, that claim has been open to debate since then: following the release of the recording spirited discussions were held in the press as to what jazz was, paving the way to contemporary discussions about jazz.

[38] Ken Prouty, 'Orality, Literacy and Mediating Musical Experience: Rethinking Oral Tradition in the Learning of Musical Improvisation', *Popular Music and Society* 29, no. 3 (2006), 326.

[39] Ibid.

performance. For example, on many occasions musicians have not recorded live, in the studio or elsewhere, but rhythm sections have laid out a track, providing the soloists the time and space in which to record their solo at their convenience. A striking example is Freddie Hubbard's 1995 record *MMTC*, in which Hubbard had musicians record tracks so the trumpeter could record his solos over a ten-month period.[40] Lennie Tristano's famous 'Line Up' is another.[41] In such scenarios, musical interaction and the social experience of the jazz performance are largely mediated.

Eugene Riviere Redervill's examination of Fritz Kreisler's vibrato in 1916 is often cited as the first study of a performer's style from recording. Others include Carl Seachore's research group at the University of Iowa in the 1920s, who took records as the primary source data, arguing that records enabled others to repeat their experiments exactly.[42] Despite these courageous efforts, however, it is fair to say that musicology has taken a dim view of recordings, partly because, as Leech-Wilkinson concurs, music studies have until fairly recently looked down at performance studies.[43] In jazz, following earlier moves by Gunther Schuller and André Hodeir, who examined recordings with a focus on musical analysis, or the work of James Lincoln Collier, who drew connections between music and cultural history, a significant portion of jazz scholarship has centred on recordings.[44] More recently, ethnomusicologists have broadened the horizon and scholars have used recordings as a platform on which to build individual research agenda, using jazz to confirm, extend or challenge the validity of paradigms of musical analysis and musicological research. As part of the *Oxford Studies in Recorded Jazz* Gabriel Solis has focused on the recording as a significant cultural object, raising issues that place jazz in relation to the field of media studies. Likewise, Catherine Tackley studied Benny Goodman's *Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert*, and examined the relationship between live performance and recording by considering a wider social, historical and musical context. Keith Waters, in his exploration of what is generally known as Miles Davis' second quintet (1965–68), used the group's

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[40] For more examples and a discussion of this effect see Matthew W. Butterfield, 'Music Analysis and the Social Life of Jazz Recordings', *Current Musicology* 71-73(2002), 331-33.

[41] 'Line Up' (1955), an improvisation by Lennie Tristano based on the chord changes of 'All of me' with alleged tape speed manipulation.

[42] Quoted in Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 1.2, paragraph 17.

[43] Ibid., paragraph 18.

[44] James Lincoln Collier, *The Making of Jazz: A Comprehensive History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978). André Hodeir, *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence* (New York: Grove Press, 1956); André Hodeir and Jean-Louis Pautrot, *The André Hodeir Jazz Reader* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006); Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); Gunther Schuller, 'Sonny Rollins and the Challenge of Thematic Improvisation', *Jazz Review* 1, no. 1 (1958).

recordings to study its compositions and to analyse individual improvisations. In similar spirit, Brian Harker's close study of Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings combined traditional analytical methods with cultural analysis and examined a range of issues: from Armstrong's sound, to his melodic invention.[45] More recently still, Mervyn Cooke examined the work of Pat Metheny, paving the way for more scholarly work to be conducted on living jazz performers.[46]

The study of recordings could not escape academic scrutiny. A main danger is, of course, as Leech-Wilkinson notes, to use too few recordings, limiting our primary data and losing sight of music's essential 'unfixedness'.[47] What exactly does a jazz recording represent? Since the present thesis is concerned with recorded artefacts, it is necessary to remind ourselves that the recording examined here are inextricably associated with innumerable live appearances. Jackson, for example, recalled that in 1945 he did ninety onenighters in a row with Gillespie's band.[48] In some cases, recordings have been canonised as works of art, or have been labelled as highly influential. Recordings, however, are simply instances whereby some representative features of a jazz performance are included. The variability between performances gives a good understanding of the endless variety of approaches that are included in a performance of a single jazz composition. If we take enough samples then we come closer to understanding some of those variables that make musical performances subjectable to an endless variety of approaches. There is no defining composition, no performance, no space representative. Rather, the nature of jazz is in constant flux and a dynamic product, aggregate of many defining parameters.

Among other problems of studying recorded jazz, Simon Zagorski-Thomas has noted that 'the analysis of recordings has had a similar effect on performance practice to the analysis of scores had on composition, particularly in jazz and popular music styles'.[49] Similarly, Travis Jackson, in criticising the outpouring of scholarly work that has focused on what he terms 'obsessive' attention to discographic detail, argued that a significant quantity

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[45] Catherine Tackley, *Benny Goodman's Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Gabriel Solis, *Thelonious Monk Quartet with John Coltrane At Carnegie Hall* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Brian Harker, *Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Hot Seven Recordings.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Keith Waters, *Miles Davis Quintet, 1965-68* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[46] Mervyn Cooke, *Pat Metheny: The ECM Years, 1975-1984* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[47] Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 1.2, paragraph 19.

[48] Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 299.

[49] Simon Zagorski-Thomas, *The Musicology of Record Production* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 6.

of scholarship often replicates score-based analysis that has formally developed for the study of European concert music.[50] Jackson pointed at the large portion of analytical work of this kind that depended on recordings as documents, 'entities whose isolatability and seeming fixity make them amenable to textual interpretation,' and argues that, while unique, recordings are inevitably incomplete representations of the multitextured event of a jazz performance.[51] By citing the work of Jed Rasula and Charles Seeger, Jackson reminds us that recordings are not 'acoustic windows giving access to how the music really sounded', but rather selective interpretations of sounds, made by the recording and production crews.[52] Having explained the limitations of score-based analysis he concludes that studies based on ethnographic fieldwork and performance interaction seem more positive steps for the direction of jazz scholarship because 'researchers studying living performers emphasise on what they might learn from *people*' rather than documents (emphasis in original), echoing Benjamin's formulation that 'even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space'.[53]

Since the resurgence of jazz studies in the 1990s, ethnographic fieldwork has signalled a paradigm shift in the discipline towards what Franz Boas described as cultural relativism; by engaging with living performers, the listeners, cultures and contexts that support that level of interaction, scholars can derive meaning for what it means within its own cultural context. And, as such, there are good reasons why Travis Jackson *et al.* advocate that the study of live performances should be privileged over recordings. Jazz music is social interaction *par excellence*, as Butterfield has noted, an act during which musicians interact with one another and their audience, who in turn evaluate the music and communicate their critical responses to each other as well as the musicians themselves. The social bonds emanating from musical interaction tend to be particularly strong because musicians coordinate 'a host of temporal and acoustic processes seldom shared in non-musical interaction'.[54] Butterfield's description is informative:

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[50] Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away*, 4.

[51] Ibid., 7-8.

[52] See Jed Rasula, 'The Memory of Media: The Seductive Menace of Records in Jazz History', in *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995). Charles Seeger, 'The Role of Sound Archives in Ethnomusicology', *Ethnomusicology* 30(1986).

[53] Jackson, however, acknowledges that jazz analysis with a focus on developing analytical schemata capable of accounting for what is distinctive about jazz is promising for the study of the music. Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away*, 13. Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Art in Modern Culture: An Anthology of Critical Texts*, ed. Francis Francina and Jonathan Harris (New York: Icon Editions, Harper Collins, 1992), 298.

[54] Butterfield, 'Music Analysis and the Social Life of Jazz Recordings', 325.

> For example, locking into a rhythmic groove with others, participating with them in the mutual articulation of time, typically implies a profound interpersonal connection: we rarely share the experience or expression of specific temporal processes with others for they tend to be personal, bound up with intimate processes of the body such as breathing or the beating of one's heart. When we breach this rhythmic privacy and participate with others in the maintenance of an exacting rhythmic groove, we signal some sort of visceral social connection that often feels quite intimate.

Butterfield concludes that this connection can extend to audience members to the extent that they are cognitively and emotionally involved in the musical event and open to the shared experience it projects.[55] But although there is much to be gained by studying music as it happens in real time, performance studies are still at an early stage and, as Leech-Wilkinson proposes, at the moment there is probably more to be gained from seeing recordings as performances to which we can return, and from studying details of them closely.[56]

We might rephrase Butterfield's formulation by proposing that a shift in focus from the gnostic aspects of musical performance to the drastic aspects of a jazz performance is due. The grasp of one's breath and the anticipation of that which is embodied (for example, the phrasing of a soloist by the rhythm section) is surely not transferable to audience members. Nor are the details of the performance themselves; knowledgeable listeners surely perceive more than others. In this respect, ethnographic studies pose their own problems as they are merely descriptive about the music that is being performed and are often fixated on the role of jazz as social medium. In his ethnographic study of the New York jazz scene, for example, Travis Jackson evokes participation as an audience member and/or in the social places where jazz is, without further definition, forcing readers to question the degree of participatory experience. Crucially, ethnographic studies do not propose models for examining what is being performed or, fundamentally to this thesis, alternative critical methods for examining the past; nor do they address the historically significant–and much celebrated–practice of jazz musicians using the details of their heroes' recorded performances as starting points for playing and improvising. Georgina Born commented favourably on Berliner's ethnography, together with that of Ingrid Monson, who showed amongst others the centrality of the recorded medium to jazz. Notably, Berliner reports that despite the growth of transcriptions of recorded solos, the recording remains, still, the primary means of style

[55] Ibid.

[56] Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 1.2, paragraph 21.

transmission and jazz education.[57] Berliner's observations link the auditory perception and physical experience back to the centre of pedagogy in jazz. This is a productive dislocation, to paraphrase Born, as it alerts us to the mediated nature and the materiality of musical experience. Recordings allow one to grasp an abundance of musical relationships unavailable to perception in live performance. For Leech-Wilkinson, it is also worth bearing in mind that, for reasons that are not fully understood but have probably something to do with 'pre-conscious triggering of responses to sound stimuli', significant construction of musical meaning is stored in real time or in short-term memory, allowing us to hear repeated performances on record to some extent as if for the first time and find the same details again and again, or turning our attention to new ones.[58] Indeed, one may gain a greater sense of awareness and control over detail, enhancing the core of experience.[59]

Ruth Stone's music ethnography, *Let the Inside Be Sweet*, famously proposed a paradigm shift and an attempt to bridge the gap she perceived to exist between ethnomusicologists who studied musical sound and those who focuses on musical behaviour.[60] Her answer to this interdisciplinary schism was an ethnography that focussed on the musical event itself, rather than on the explication of either musical or cultural systems. She noted that such event-centred ethnography provided empirical grounding for statements about both musical sound and behaviour, each of which is relevant for the production and comprehension of meaning in a musical performance. Butterfield's response to Stone's event-centred ethnography is worth noticing: Stone proposes to generalise from an analysis of a society's paradigmatic musical event to an understanding of its culture, where culture appears as the stable set of practices and values embodied by that society.[61] This event, Butterfield argues, serves as an exemplar of a broader musical and cultural system. On the contrary, he proposes a paradigm shift that reads culture less through the musical event 'than to examine the perceptual and social possibilities generated in specific musical situations'.[62]

Butterfield proposes that the structure of the event shapes music perception and that it influences the emergence and experience of a music community. He notes that in this

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[57] Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, 96 & 98, Born, 'For a Relational Musicology', 237.

[58] Leech-Wilkinson, 'The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performances', (2009): http://www.charm.kcl.ac.uk/studies/chapters/intro.html (accessed 24 July 2017), chapter 1.2, paragraph 21.

[59] Butterfield, 'Music Analysis and the Social Life of Jazz Recordings', 328.

[60] Ruth Stone, *Let the Inside Be Sweet: The Interpretation of Music Event Among the Kpelle of Liberia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

[61] Butterfield, 'Music Analysis and the Social Life of Jazz Recordings', 344.

[62] Ibid.

approach culture functions not as the endpoint of analysis, but as the background context for the specific event, 'a provisionally stable field of practices and values by which participants infer musical meaning and adopt appropriate social behaviour.'[63] Butterfield's view seems rather totalitarian, ignoring that a musical event may feed back to the culture of which it is part, although he acknowledges this possibility in his endnotes. I acknowledge Butterfield's thorough consideration of the subject, but do not wish to adopt his epistemological stance. I do not argue an either/or division; nor do I put forward an all-encompassing consideration. Rather, I propose that different modes of analysis have different things to tell us about the many elements that constitute a jazz performance. The focus and analysis of a jazz event, whether in a recording or live, surely would have different objectives on diverse occasions. This stance permits me in this thesis to examine particular areas of the jazz culture, whilst allowing the voices of those who do not fit 'easily into a single mould' to be heard.

What recorded music offers to this project is a different type of musical text: it is a unique instance and the same every time it is reproduced (an absolute difference to the score as a text).[64] The body of records available and the specifics of the sonic products permit the study of the 'sonic signatures' of Milt Jackson and those of his associates under scrutiny. It encourages us to think how sonic signatures create similar extensions, alterations and expansions of the rules of performance practice. It also allows us to explore the metaphorical meaning they may elicit, providing the data for the examination of jazz improvisation as a form of culturally situated cognition. As Albert Lord has similarly noted about the principles of oral form for the study of epic poetry, the improvised solos by Jackson that are documented on recordings are useful in the study of jazz because, by working backwards from their end product—in a mode of reverse engineering—we can learn how they were initially formed and understand all the elements that defined them as jazz.[65] This offers the opportunity for systematic analysis of embodied knowledge and experience, of imagined worlds and metaphors. Records also allows us to reach a more specific understanding of how

[63] Ibid.

[64] Technologies have changed the way we listen to those recording made over half a century ago, and I do not wish to suggest that the listening experience has remained unchanged. However, those aspects of the content of these recordings with which this thesis is concerned (the melodic and harmonic material, tempo, etc.) remain unchanged.

[65] In their landmark study on the oral tradition of South Slavic epic singing, Milman Parry and Albert Lord noted 'They [the principles of oral form] would be a starting point for a comparative study of oral poetry which sought to see how the way of life of people gives rise to a poetry of a given kind and a given degree of excellence'. Although Lord agrees that this is not 'fully entered upon', his comments are very close to what I refer to as 'situated cognition' in this thesis. Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2000), 3-4.

these signatures evolved, examining the extent to which practitioners were influenced across different geographical locations and historical periods, transforming jazz into an instrument of transnational cultural exchange. This in turn brings to the surface a network of cultural relations and a shared understanding of what jazz improvisation constitutes at different places and moments of music history that continue to attract practitioners from around the world. This more focused approach forces us to think in the end not of what or where jazz is but rather, as George Lewis has noted, who is jazz.[66]

That jazz music is considered an exquisite product of human culture and is, consequently, so often assumed to be merely a cultural artefact, is an impediment to achieving a specific understanding of its modes of production. Obviously, for an all-encompassing consideration we need to include a range of types of participatory experience, such as those of editors, sound engineers and record producers. The close study of recordings, for example, informs on the impact of the technological mediation in the progress of recording technologies which, together with a consideration of the instruments' manufacture, brings us closer to how progress is achieved. At the centre of this argument, however, is whether the cultural context of a musical experience is as important as its sonic structure in determining musical meaning. Again, these are not discrete subject areas but are raised here so that the analytical section is not interrupted by having to systematically elaborate these ideas. Although a nominal text such as a recording or a transcribed example may be singled out, musical meaning is explored through production and reception, which in turn need to be examined within their cultural context.[67] In this thesis, the reception/production dichotomy serves as an analytical tool and is a means for interpreting musical activity rather than simply characterising it. Equally, there is a strong methodological difference between the more philological scored-based analysis that jazz has seen and the examination of the recorded medium, in which the recorded artefact replaces the score as the primary medium of musical representation.

Lastly, there is an important point to be made about the nature of the recordings under examination: while musicology has been slow to consider a musicology of record production, technological changes have already created a shift from the recording as hardware to software; from a physical product to a digital file. This development follows a corpus of comprehensive recordings of previously unreleased takes aimed at feeding an industry that

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[66] George Lewis, 'Foreword: Who is Jazz?', in *Jazz Worlds/world Jazz*, ed. Philp Bolman and Goffredo Plastino (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), xxiii.

[67] Zagorski-Thomas, *The Musicology of Record Production*, 32.

challenges the authority of the musicians over their work, transforming the way the music is perceived. Such changes pose problems to historians. In this project, for example, Jackson's recordings contain important information such as the date and place where the recordings took place, and the names of musicians, engineers, producers, photographers, designers and other actors who were involved in the production. Something as seemingly unimportant as the photographs included on the sleeves of a record may inform the analyst about the set-up of the recording and the technologies available. Moreover, the employment of well-respected critics and commentators of the time to compose the liner notes that accompanied a record have proven, as in this thesis, invaluable. When produced with the artist's authority, this critical documentation may inform us about the artist's perception of their own work at the time, as well as the reception of the artist in their social space. The omission of such information today testifies to the changes in perception of what constitutes a musical work and proves crucial to the jazz art and its practice.

2 THE RESONANT BODY AND THE NEWER 'NEW' JAZZ STUDIES: HISTORICAL, EMBODIED AND ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES

> *But he never fell into the error of arresting his intellectual development by any formal acceptance of creed or system, or of mistaking, for a house in which to live, an inn that is but suitable for the sojourn of a night, or for a few hours of a night in which there are no stars and the moon is in travail. Mysticism, with its marvellous power of making common things strange to us, and the supple antinomianism that always seems to accompany it, moved him for a season; and for a season he inclined to the materialistic doctrines of the "Darwinismus" movement in Germany, and found curious pleasure in tracing the thoughts and passions of men to some pearly cell in the brain, or some white nerve in the body, delighting in the conception of the absolute dependence of the spirit on certain physical conditions, morbid or healthy, normal or diseased. Yet, as has been said of him before, no theory of life seemed to him to be of any importance compared with life itself. He felt keenly conscious of how barren all intellectual speculation is when separated from action and experiment. He knew that the senses, no less than the soul, have their spiritual mysteries to reveal.*[1]
>
> Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Although one aim of this thesis, as is apparent from the roughly chronological organisation of its chapters, is to examine the origins and development of Milt Jackson's improvisation style, my approach is by no means limited to a historical account. At the centre of enquiry is also a consideration of Jackson's improvisations from the embodied, practical perspective of the performing vibist and the need to situate his improvisations in the matrix of jazz styles. An exploration of the meanings and interpretations of his performances cannot proceed, however, without an examination of the contested nature of the analytical tools used in scholarly writing about jazz. In this chapter, therefore, I will contextualise my approach by reviewing some of the scholarly literature relevant to the present thesis. I am concerned with problems of jazz historiography and analysis, and particularly with the absence of analytical methods with regards to modes of musical production from the experiential perspective of the improvising musician. Because of the many disciplines that operate in the field of jazz studies and in this work specifically, an all-encompassing literature review is neither possible nor desirable.[2] Instead, I attempt to engage with relevant literature across the chapters of this thesis.

At the same time, I want to offer some new perspectives on the current state of jazz studies, as well as of the shape of jazz studies to come. Although this chapter takes the form

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[1] Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (New York: The Heritage Press, 1957 [1890]), 170.

[2] In fact, from its inception the field of jazz studies has been less than a discipline than a collection of sub-disciplines–music theory, ethnomusicology, cultural anthropology, history, African American studies, music analysis and more recently the musicology of record production, critical and feminist theory.

of a bibliographic essay (it identifies and evaluates some of the core literature about jazz), it follows Georgina Born's influential essay on interdisciplinary musicology and argues for a more relational study of jazz.[3] Like Born's, my efforts imply that I count myself lucky to be working in an age of diversity in scholarship, in which scholars aspire to achieve some kind of fruitful interaction or convergence; an urge to reconfigure the methods of understanding jazz, and redefine what understanding jazz is. My focus here has more to do with the latter. I argue that, although the relation between the methods of understanding jazz and the subject itself is being questioned frequently, it is done so with an equal measure of good intentions and bafflement. Consequently, the challenges presented by such mutual engagement often prevents a more significant advancement on this front.

As the approaches taken by several authors discussed in this literature review will show, to write convincingly about the experiential dimensions of music-making often requires writers to adopt the embodied perspective of the performer. [4] Thus, first person writing, which I often resort to in this chapter, is commonly employed. I will continue, therefore, with a personal confession: one that readers will be pleased to know is among few in what follows.[5] While music is, for most musicians I believe, a practical pursuit—something to be done—my recent engagement with the analytical and discursive practices of traditional musicology resulted in neglecting the central core of my musicality: performing music.[6] And yet, my interest in engaging with the music's more cerebral qualities arises from an interest in what, at first glance, I perceived as interdisciplinary work: not the relating of more than one branch of knowledge, but the relating of practices that I trusted to operate in the same field of action. A reconciliation of ideas, if you will. This rather optimistic stance aimed to relate my experience in making and responding to music to the knowledge to be gained from contemporary theories and musicological discourse. Specifically, it would allow me to present alternative models to the reading of jazz history and criticism; models that would help oral tradition and musical discourse to inform one another. For it has been my impression that the numerous critical strategies we have borrowed from other disciplines

[3] Georgina Born, 'For a Relational Musicology: Music and Interdisciplinarity, Beyond the Practice Turn', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 135, no. 2 (2010 Nov).

[4] For a recent example in which this stance is explicitly made see: Alfonso Montuori, 'The Complexity of Improvisation and the Improvisation of Complexity: Social Science, Art and Creativity', *Human Relations* 56, no. 2 (2003).

[5] For a recent example in which this stance is explicitly made see: Ibid.

[6] Suzanne Cusick has described a similar state, between what she views as her 'musicological *habitus*' (a state in which she is inclined to think of the music's fixed, text-like qualities) and the way her performing self makes her think about and respond to music. Suzanne Cusick, 'Feminist Theory, Music Theory and the Mind/body Problem', *Perspectives of New Music* 32, no. 1 (2008 Mar 06), 10..

have not taken jazz scholarship as far as they have led research in other fields. Worse, these borrowings have taken us to oddly paralysing, rather than empowering, conclusions about how jazz has changed throughout the course of time. Perhaps worst of all, these critical strategies have brought us to intellectually stimulating but ultimately unmusical places; to a milieu where we begin to wonder which were those qualities in music that we cherished so much in the first place.

My reaction to the study of jazz has been rooted in personal considerations. Having experienced an education in a number of highly appraised institutions, where the mythopoeia of ideas superseded, mistakenly, the most elementary foundations of meaning and usefulness in higher education, I have found myself in classrooms where the tools used to study jazz could not, surely, relate to what a young musician was experiencing in a vibrant music scene or even, more humbly, in a practice room. Of course, it is only relatively occasionally that the lack of scope and clear-sightedness necessary to throw real light on musical experience has been pointed out. But this is another story; one that has already been told.[7] Alas, jazz courses still focus on historical events in abstract form (on historical myths, legends or fiction)—not on the historicity of events, more precisely, even though the distinction is rarely made—at their moment of utterance and sometimes on their aftermath. Today, it has become evident that the study of jazz has been injected with a vaccine so powerful as to dissolve the music's agitational force almost entirely, to use Edward Said's metaphor, and is treated as an object concrete and detached from the music itself and, essentially, its human host.[8] Jazz is not understood enough as the product of human labour and its study—still at an elementary level—is not sufficiently practice based.

In this respect, both Travis Jackson and Peter Hollerbach remind us that the grand narrative of jazz—the one celebrated in conservatoires and universities—has been artificially conceived through a selective process flawed by its reductionism.[9] This development has of course been the outcome of what is now considered a historical cliché of the greatest respectability, that the 1940s marked a period of change for jazz in what we came to know as

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[7] Retellings include John Butt, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Laurence Dreyfus, *Bach and the Patterns of Invention* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1996). Timothy Rice, *May it Fill Your Soul: Experiencing Bulgarian Music* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[8] Edward Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999).

[9] Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away*, 27-8, 48; Peter Hollerbach, '(Re)voicing Tradition: Improvising Aesthetics and Identity on Local Jazz Scenes', *Popular Music* 23, no. 2 (2004), 156. I discuss the 'grand narrative' of jazz in chapter five in the context of 'the jazz tradition'.

the ‘Bebop era’. Whether such special pleading on behalf of an entire decade can ever be justified, there is little doubt that, in the long 1940s, jazz shed its populist impulses and moved up the cultural ladder. Notwithstanding the locomotive energies of the profitable enterprise of jazz criticism, the popularity of jazz in the curricula of institutions worldwide is a reliable measure of the respect that the music now attracts. Boosted by its designation by the House of Representatives and the United States Senate as ‘a rare and valuable national American treasure’, in this new ‘jazz age’ universities bestow honorary doctorates on jazz musicians, whose names are now cited among that cadre of honourees as innovators and cultural contributors to what were otherwise dystopian times.[10] History classes and scholarly monographs, ‘comprehensive’ recordings, the movies, the media and cyberspace have all changed the way the music is perceived. At the same time, the highest echelons of the jazz world have been quick in establishing the ever-unstable dialogue between public enjoyment and critical acceptance, between audience demand and the critical canon (both necessary to keep the whole precarious business financially afloat). Critics, scholars and jazz aficionados—the role of the last in this music business will perhaps one day be addressed with criticism—have all played their parts in constructing this, irredeemably artificial, industry, one that appears in many guises.[11] Alas, our appreciation of the sonic riches and performative practices account for a small proportion of this pedigree shift.

Amid these developments, academics have had their say. In the remarkable flowering of interdisciplinary research on music of all kinds that we have witnessed since the 1990s and in ‘the modern resurgence of jazz studies’ as the title of Stuart Nicholson’s monograph suggests, jazz has been pushed from the periphery of musicological enquiry to the centre of attention.[12] This was inevitable, perhaps, given the rapidly changing pragmatics of research; also, given musicology’s determined love-affair with the ‘supply-side’ of its subject, as Roger Parker, in terms equally applicable to jazz, maintains.[13] In the 1990s, musicologists and ethnomusicologists used jazz to confirm, extend and challenge the validity of paradigms of musicological research, whilst scholars approaching jazz from other disciplines (anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, art historians and cultural critics) have refracted it through the prisms of their respective fields: political protest and social interaction,

[10] Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 39.

[11] It is surprising that while certain local jazz scenes are only sustainable by networks of loyal enthusiasts and insiders with specialist knowledge, the role of the jazz aficionado has been widely overlooked.

[12] Stuart Nicholson, *Jazz: The Modern Resurgence* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1990).

[13] Roger Parker, ‘As a Stranger Give it Welcome: Musical Meanings in 1830s London’, in *Representations in Western Music*, ed. Joshua S. Walden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 33.

deviance, occupational and organisational behaviour among other things.[14] These changes accompanied a mainstream of jazz literature; a sizeable corpus that produced and validated existing myths and legends, focusing on personal triumphs and disasters, on the genius and the tragic.

These prospects have had very different implications for other sub-disciplines of music research than they have for jazz scholarship. As Benjamin Givan notes, for Western art music interdisciplinary research developed on the heels of a long tradition of musicological enquiry, focused above all on The Music Itself, its numerous sub-disciplines and their discourse.[15] On the contrary, if your business was The Music Itself, then jazz studies did not retain you long. Quite the contrary, in fact: despite its historical significance and potential to enliven current debates, improvisation—a practice central not only to jazz but also to indigenous musical cultures worldwide—features fleetingly in modern jazz scholarship. For just as soon as jazz began to be considered a field worthwhile of scholarship, just over half a century ago, extramural pressures were causing commentators to question whether it was even politically appropriate to put its musical offerings at the centre of attention. Following Amiri Baraka's influential *Jazz and the White Critic* and his proposal that jazz is primarily a cultural phenomenon and only secondarily musical, the consensual view from within the broader humanities has been that jazz is purely a cultural artefact.[16] Baraka's argument was partly in response to Gunther Schuller and André Hodeir's analytical work of the 1950s. A year later after Baraka's proposal, in a racially contentious moment Martin Williams responded to Baraka by arguing that white scholars and critics were better caretakers of jazz and black music making than African American themselves.[17] Perhaps because of extramural pressures, Schuller also admitted that jazz is 'more a sociological manifestation than music'.[18]

Racially contentious attitudes were in abundance in early writing about jazz. Critics were conventionally white, adding to the frustration of African American musicians and thinkers about how jazz was to be understood. The institutional centre of French, jazz criticism, for example, Hugues Panassié, Charles Delaunay and Robert Gofin, had strong

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[14] Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away*, 4.

[15] Benjamin Givan, *The Music of Django Reinhardt* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), preface.

[16] LeRoi Jones [Amiri Baraka], 'Jazz and the White Critic', In *Black Music*, 15–24 (New York: Akashi Classics, 2010, originally published in 1968):15.

[17] Martin Williams, 'The Bystander" *Downbeat* (9 April 1964); quoted in Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 36.

[18] Schuller, *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development*, 3.

links to the primitivistic movement. For them, the primitive was something positive, a romanticised ideal towards which artists should aspire. Panassié praised African American musicians but in terms that revealed insulting presuppositions about the nature of African American musical knowledge and black cultural life.[19] He wrote:

> Instead of leading towards progress, the development of musical theories which are often erroneous, has, one the contrary, a tendency to muzzle inspiration, to restrain and cripple the creative effort of the great artist who thus loses much of his spontaneity. That is why musicians who are untrained in musical theory and who have no preconceived notions often express themselves with a naturalness which, granted equal talent, makes them far more interesting than the culture musicians, who are more or less consciously victims of the theories of their age. In general, such independence is impossible except in a primitive music and then only in the beginnings of that music.[20]

There is no denying that extensions of the 'noble savage' Enlightenment motif typified French jazz critiques during the interwar period; especially the idea that unique musical ability resided in the biology of African descendants.[21] Hodeir wrote that the essence of jazz resided in a pair of musical features known as 'swing' and 'hot playing'. Hodeir's narrow structural view of jazz was based on European notions of aesthetic autonomy that dovetailed conveniently with interwar French musicians' economic self-interest that fell out of favour with today's influential cultural oriented school of jazz scholarship.[22]

There is no denying that extensions of the 'noble savage' Enlightenment motif typified French jazz critiques during the interwar period; especially the idea that unique musical ability resided in the biology of African descendants.[23] Commentators of the time, like Panassié, wrote of black rhythm and white harmony, of black talent and white knowledge, reinforcing a historic essentialisation of rhythm in African American musical discource. For Panassié the ability to 'swing' resided in the biological predisposition of African descendants towards an overtly percussive musical style of African descendants.[24] The tendency of an eroticized subculture to stand for the jazz community is in fact widely

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[19] Ingrid Monson, 'Doubleness and Jazz Improvisation: Irony, Parody, and Ethnomusicology', *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 2 (1994), 286.

[20] Hugues Panassié, *The Real Jazz*, trans. Ann Sorelle Williams (New York: 1942), 14-15.

[21] Jeffrey H. Jackson, 'Making Jazz French: The Reception of Jazz Music in Paris, 1927-1934', *French Historical Studies* 25, no. 1 (2002), 154.

[22] Givan, *The Music of Django Reinhardt*, preface.

[23] Jackson, 'Making Jazz French: The Reception of Jazz Music in Paris, 1927-1934', 154. Quoted in Coady, *John Lewis and the Challenge of "Real" Black Music*, 15.

[24] Hugues Panassié, *Le Jazz Hot: Le Guide De La Musique Swing Et Du Vrai Jazz* (Paris: R.-A. Corrêa, 1936).

resented, and this subcultural perspective has distorted the general perception of African American cultural life.[25] Ingrid Monson reports that during her ethnographical research one of her interviewees remarked in passing: 'If a black man knows some shit, that's talent. If the white guy knows the same shit, he's smart'.[26] Of course, this stance was not exclusive to jazz. Langston Hughes, for example, was once regarded as 'an easily accessible writer', a poet of 'plain, easy to understand language' and 'an unsophisticated and provincial poet' whose 'approach to poetry was far too simple and unlearned'.[27] At the heart of the problem is the inability to recognise the heterogeneity of musical elements found in jazz life, which Monson values as analogous to the heterogeneity of African American cultural experience.[28]

Although it needs to be understood that alternate and more pluralistic understandings of how one might authentically contribute to the debate were almost simultaneously in play, we see how the work of Panassié was permeated by attitudes set forth by early writing about African culture, which in turn attempted to distance African and 'Western' cultural products. Ronald Radano has traced the origins of this sort of essentialism in early European writing about the African continent, in which perceptions of savagery and primitivism were linked to African dance and musical performance, highlighting the civility and supremacy of white cultural products.[29] William Bosman's 'New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea (1705/1814)' provides one such example demonstrating how the syncopation and volume of percussion parts in African music were sometimes exaggerated in order to 'widen the gap between Europeans and Africans'.[30] Such a prejudiced rhetorical practice laid the foundations for arguments about diasporic forms of African music as essentially rhythmic and guided the interpretation and analysis of early jazz, as demonstrated in the work of Panassié among many others.[31] These myths have of course been widely challenged. Kofi

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[25] Sociological writings that have taken this perspective include Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963). Howard S. Becker, 'The Professional Dance and His Audience', *American Journal of Sociology* 57(1951). William Cameron, 'Sociological Notes on the Jam Session', *Social Forces* 33(1954). Alan P. Meriam, 'The Jazz Community', *Social Forces* 38(1960). Monson cites Russell's biography of Parker as a good example of a 'romanticised, eroticised, subcultural perspective' on Charlie Parker's life. Cited in Monson, 'Doubleness and Jazz Improvisation'.

[26] Monson, 'Doubleness and Jazz Improvisation', 311.

[27] Cited in Meta DuEwa Jones, 'Listening to What the Ear Demands: Langston Hughes and His Critics', *Callaloo* 25, no. 4 (2002), 1146-47.

[28] Monson, 'Doubleness and Jazz Improvisation', 311.

[29] Ronald Radano, *Lying Up the Nation: Race and Black Music* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 81.

[30] Ibid.

[31] For other such portrayals see also: Barry Ulanov, *A History of Jazz in America* (New York: Viking Press, 1952), 12.

Agawu, for example, questioned the championing of rhythm as something exclusive to Africans given the experimentation by Elliott Carter, Steve Reich and Igor Stravinsky among others.[32]

These contests propelled a debate about the appropriateness of analysing jazz by using tools suited for the analysis of European concert music, which in turn followed a series of early efforts that assigned prestige to jazz by comparing it to prevalent Eurocentric norms and confined the study of jazz to score-based, textual analysis.[33] To more understand such developments, it is important to consider the view of Western music as founded in a notated text and how such a perspective influenced any attempts to analyse jazz as 'serious music', worth the attention of scholarly study. [34] As Leech-Wilkinson notes, from the later Middle Ages onwards, notation contributed increasingly to the transmission of music from person to person and from place to place, so that by the time music came to be identified with musical works notation provided a quite detailed representation of those aspects of works thought to be the most essential. As a result, works and scores became increasingly synonymous. What the composer wrote down gradually came to carry considerable significance, and musicologists increasingly (especially from the later nineteenth century onwards) saw one of their most important functions as ensuring that published scores represented precisely the intentions of the composer.[35] In early jazz writing, it became then 'the duty' of the white analysts to notate jazz performances and to study the written notes so they could reach an understanding of the essence of the work; a role that was of course inflected with white supremacist ideals and influenced the reception of jazz music.

The shift of attention towards a notated score brought of course some advantages to the enterprise of jazz criticism. The reasons for this vary. It was possible to exploit and market notated jazz much more widely. Also, as Daniel Leech-Wilkinson noted in terms equally applicable to jazz, concentrating on the transcribed performance gave one a text to study, something one could see and write about in such a way that one's readers could check one's insights against a score and learn to share them.[36] Although Travis Jackson has

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[32] Kofi Agawu, 'The Invention of African Rhythm', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48, no. 3 (1995), 386.

[33] A position shared by Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 19.; and Travis Jackson Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away*, 4.

[34] See Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of* Music, 1.1 Musicology and Performances, Paragraph 5.

[35] Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of* Music, 1.1 Musicology and Performances, Paragraph 5.

[36] Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performance* (London: CHARM, 2009), 1.1 Musicology and Performances, Paragraph 4 http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap1.html (accessed 11 October 2017).

criticised such analytical efforts, 'because of their intentions or target audiences, many of those researchers privileged (and privilege) categories, concerts, and methodologies drawn from the study of Western concert music and derive their research questions from them. […] it is clear that they might fail to engage other important issues', he noted that to some degree analytical work also convinced an older generation of scholars that jazz is worthy of study.[37] Nevertheless, musicologists for their part have spoken considerably of jazz in terms appropriate for the analysis of European concert music, making jazz an imperfect version of classical music rather than something examinable in its own right.

Equally, as Ken Prouty points out, from the 1920s instructional pamphlets and method books were already widely disseminated, providing information on how to develop improvisational skills like those, for example, of Louis Armstrong.[38] *Downbeat* magazine also published transcriptions and brief discussions of jazz solos regularly and from its early days. Yet, the most representative example of such sustained analysis is generally acknowledged to be Gunther Schuller's 'Sonny Rollins and the Challenge of Thematic Improvisation' in 1958.[39] Schuller, a highly trained classical musician and a long habitué of jazz through his collaboration with Miles Davis and Gigi Gryce amongst others, examined long range relationships, seeking to find unified entities in the solos of Rollins: a method of enquiry that was to remain by and large a regular quest for jazz analysts. Early in the article the author outlined some of his evaluative criteria for judging a solo's worth:

> To a very great extent, improvised solos [...] have suffered from a general lack of over-all cohesiveness and direction – the lack of a unifying force. [...] These have been the victims of one or perhaps all of the following symptoms: (1) The average improvisation is mostly a stringing together of unrelated ideas; (2) Because of the independently spontaneous character of most improvisation, a series of solos by different players within a single piece have very little chance of bearing any relationship to each other [...] (3) In those cases where composing (or arranging) is involved, the body of interspersed solos generally has no relation to these non-improvised sections; (4) Otherwise interesting solos are often marred by a sudden quotation from some completely irrelevant material.[40]

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[37] Ibid., 13.

[38] Prouty, 'Orality, Literacy and Mediating Musical Experience: Rethinking Oral Tradition in the Learning of Musical Improvisation', 325.

[39] Schuller, 'Sonny Rollins and the Challenge of Thematic Improvisation'. Schuller's article, along with numerous *Jazz Review* volumes have been digitised and are now fully searchable online through the Jazz Studies Online, sponsored by the Centre of Jazz Studies at Columbia University.

[40] Ibid., 6.

Schuller acknowledged that some improvisations may succeed simply because they are 'meaningful realisations of a well sustained over-all feeling', but was searching for something beyond. He was pleased to find that:

> There is now a tendency among a number of jazz musicians to bring thematic (or motivic) and structural unity into improvisation. Some do this by combining composition and improvisation, for instance the Modern Jazz Quartet and the Giuffre Three; others, like Sonny Rollins, prefer to work solely by means of extemporization. Several of the latter's recordings offer remarkable instances of this approach.[41]

Schuller's work attracted much criticism. As many jazz scholars have pointed out, he seemed not to be concerned with the processual nature of jazz and his musical preferences, in the quotation above, seemed to be culturally distant from the black vernacular music of the time; the Modern Jazz Quartet remains an exception as they appeared to accommodate their music to white-dominated concert hall standards. Givan points out that Schuller commits 'the cardinal error of evaluating Rollins's music by Eurocentric criteria that efface or distort the meanings it would have held for the saxophonist himself as a postwar African-American musician'.[42] John Murphy explains that nineteenth-century concepts of originality, organic unity and the 'distaste for derivativeness' were still part of our critical ideas in the twentieth century, pointing at the work of Schuller as a representative example. Murphy noted that Schuller fundamentally failed to question whether the musicians or their intended audiences shared these criteria.[43] He cites the work of literary critic Harold Bloom whose work, he notes, was a 'justified' reaction to earlier approaches to the analysis of poetry that ignored extra-textual data in favour of the syntactical relationships within a poem and argues that, similarly, the analysis of jazz improvisations that treat the transcribed versions of solos in the same way as Western art-music compositions do much the same thing.[44]

Towards the end of the last century a backlash against the text-driven view of music began to strike. Partly it was a reaction against the idea that the accurate reproduction of a text produced an accurate representation of the composer's intentions—so that the notion of historically informed performance came under attack.[45] Partly it was a reaction against the

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Benjamin Givan, 'Gunther Schuller and the Challenge of Sonny Rollins: Stylistic Context, Intentionality, and Jazz Analysis', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 67, no. 1 (2014), 1.

[43] John P. Murphy, 'Jazz Improvisation: The Joy of Influence', *The Black Perspective in music* 18, no. 1 (1990), 8. Among recent critics

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., Paragraph 6.

idea that analysis could explain the meaning of musical works, and music began to be a representation of a culture rather than as a self-contained autonomous art form. Both these trends have brought welcome doses of realism into the world of jazz studies, the one allowing once again the possibility that performances might have something to bring to scores; the other making it easier, after a century of rampant pseudo-science, for musicologists to admit that what music means depends not just on what it consists of but also, and to a very large extent, on who we are. Leech-Wilkinson explains that musicology is 'still, for the most part, operating with the notion that works are one category of music and performances another'.[46]

The debate concerning the inappropriateness of using analytical methods and criteria evolved specifically for the examination of Western art music for the investigation of jazz improvisation was to be continued and, in fact, has been one of the most treacherous areas of jazz studies.[47] As Mervyn Cooke notes, it is a familiar pattern these days for jazz scholars whose work includes transcription and analysis to begin with a summary of the relevant pros and cons, then acknowledge Schuller's aforementioned analysis. This, Cooke points out humorously,

> is generally followed by a stronger acknowledgement of the severe rebuttal the Schuller model subsequently received from commentators uncomfortable about the techniques he employed and the limited cultural outlook they allegedly signalled; the expression of the need for a more appropriate method of analysing jazz, along with a recognition that it has yet to come; after which, more often than not, the author may well in fact proceed to use more or less the same methods as Schuller, but with plentiful renewed caveats being issued along the way.[48]

As Cooke acknowledges, such discussions can take up a good deal of space in historical overviews of jazz studies. But whilst jazz acts on a variety of levels, the analytical bifurcation that came as a consequence prevented a more integrated engagement with the subtleties of the creative processes involved.

Today I find such ideas imposed on the study of jazz to have some troublesome results. If changes were happening in the early 1990s, Born argues,

> depending upon one's perspective, they were fed by a pincer movement in which the impact of humanistic feminist and critical theory in musicology was being matched

[46] Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of* Music, 1.1 Musicology and Performances, Paragraph 6.

[47] Mervyn Cooke, *Pat Metheny: The ECM Years, 1975-1984* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2017): For some recent criticism of Schuller see: Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away*, 13.

[48] Cooke, email correspondence, 1 August 2017. The comments quoted here had been included in an early draft of *Pat Metheny: The ECM Years* and were toned down before publication at the suggestion of a peer reviewer who was uncomfortable with them.

> by that of the emergent field in popular music studies [of which jazz is often considered as inseparable] which, influenced in turn by British cultural studies and its sociological orientation, was from the outset permeated by a range of post-Marxist problematics, including, centrally, the politics of race and class.[49]

Following the resurgence of the jazz academy (circa 1990s), a significant outlay of critical energy was devoted to relating jazz to the political crises and moral issues with which jazz had been historically permeated. In so doing, scholars gave the field of jazz studies a primarily sociological orientation and ignored developments on several other fronts. An obvious example is the absence of influence of feminist theory, listed above by Born as a significant advancement of which the impact resonated in musicology and, significantly for my purposes, the absence of commitment to embodied lived experience that feminist theorists have over the years advocated; the latter being the most evident. Consequently, the 1990s witnessed an impressive number of works that claimed to stake out new territories for jazz research. These trends, in their most recent utterance dubbed the 'new jazz studies', appeared across a multitude of disciplines in the humanities that included history, English, African American studies and more recently have been an area of investigation for cultural anthropologists.

In response to these developments, the new jazz studies focused on the context of music making, the music's role as a social medium, and established a field of research that, oddly enough, discussed jazz in separation from the music, the product and manifestation of our subject of enquiry. Ethnomusicologists, for example, though they have broadened the horizon by emphasising the roles of culture and musical interaction, have focused primarily on the role of jazz as a social medium. Thirty years or so after Baraka's statement, the consensual view from within the broader humanities is that music is a cultural phenomenon, constituted of practices, concepts and perceptions that are grounded in social interactions and constructions; and, likewise, in the scholarly field of jazz studies, jazz is viewed as a cultural phenomenon, separated from the realm of the popular, of which scope of influence can be experienced in its new social contract with the public and across a multitude of cultural institutions.[50] Once controversial, this move has now, it seems fair to say, been institutionalised as the main locus of the discipline. For example, questions on the interrelation between bebop on the one hand, and categories and hierarchies of social structure, identity, power and masculinity, on the other are quite frequent in jazz studies.

[49] Born, 'For a Relational Musicology', 208.

[50] Robert G. O'Meally, *et al.*, eds. *Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

It should be emphasised, in case this is not evident from what follows, that I welcome these efforts as significant contributions to jazz studies. Sociological and culturally oriented scholarship has offered much to jazz and there is still much ground to be covered. As Deborah Mawer notes, although the New Jazz Studies scholarship can sometimes scholarship 'grossly undervalue the musicians concerned', the overwhelming outcome of this critical turn has been towards 'viewing jazz positively rather than defensively across relevant wider arenas'.[51] But, while I concur that jazz is more than an abstract set of technical qualities, chord changes, 'hot playing' and frenetic rhythms (danceable or otherwise), the result of this work has been rather monotonous. These endeavours, together with the hundred or so other stalwarts we call 'monumental works' (I put these words in scare quotes because they are obvious exaggerations), have sustained both saints and sinners through a decade of literature devoted to jazz, a decade and more that has precipitated decline; that has hindered change. Some of these restrictive paths have been an impediment to achieving specific understanding of the modes of musical production in jazz, whilst some of these endeavours have further mystified the overly romanticised notion of the music's production. As a result, our understanding of jazz music rarely rises above the myopic or the romantic. It comes as no surprise, then, when John Gennari notes that 'a recent study of jazz criticism declares that our direct experience of the music itself is finally illusive'.[52]

Jazz studies have shown little interest in discussing the music as embodied activity. This is particularly interesting when we consider our own lived experience of organisations: a rational and orderly view of organisations hardly does justice to the 'Byzantine complexities', as Alfonso Montuori noted, of life in academia or the private sector.[53] The absence of commitment to embodied lived experience meant that we deny the bodies involved in those social or musical acts where jazz happens (the feminine represents the physical aspects of cognition, the intellectual, the masculine, as Cusick explains, although this, of course, is a relationship far more symbolic than literal). [54] But there are, I believe, in addition to the political and class implications, moral consequences too. By ignoring the importance of bodily participation and the thinkers who pointed out the antinomies between the mind and the body, between the self and the other, scholars denied not only the bodies in jazz (that is,

[51] Deborah Mawer, *French Music and Jazz in Conversation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 2.

[52] John Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cool: Jazz and the Critics* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2006), 4.

[53] Montuori, 'The Complexity of Improvisation and the Improvisation of Complexity', 238.

[54] Cusick, 'Feminist Theory, Music Theory and the Mind/body Problem', 16.

the bodies that make jazz happen), but their own bodies and involvement in the modes of research too; the embodiment in both process and product, of both informant and analyst, and were unable to see the enormously symbolic and sensual power of the body in jazz.[55] While the work of Baraka, Ralph Ellison and Albert Murray contained misapprehensions of specific musical and technical matters, these thinkers highlighted, nevertheless, the music's inseparability from the African American communities and the bodies that have nurtured it. As writing about jazz and its study becomes more and more ensconced in the academy, writing that comes from outside has, like the music's cultural connections in the analytical work of the 1950s, been marginalised.

This project is conceived in response to these alternatives. My commitment to the value of insider knowledge places me at odds with much work that took shape in jazz during the 1990s and animates my concern at the apparent lack of participation of the scholars who produced it. An attempt to reverse engineer the methods used to understand jazz and to interpret the symbols that permeated jazz studies shows the lack of any connection with the 'real world' of jazz.[56] A surplus of scholarship discusses jazz in an abstract form, working for the service of describing practices of the mind for the sake of informing other minds and, as a result, jazz studies took its position on one of our civilisation's most fundamental and enduring philosophical issues: what Cusick and Le Guin refer to as the Mind/Body problem.[57] Scholarly thinking about jazz dealt in so much detail that it was unable to see the obvious; we perceived an art that exists only when bodies resonate, as an art of and for the intellect, and have rationalised jazz culture whilst running the risk of highly misrepresenting it.

But the placing of the political among jazz scholarship's core concerns proved to be an immanently political act itself. By pressing politics on jazz, the new jazz studies perceived the political as something that was taking place outside the jazz scene and, 'pressing politics on jazz' quickly became synonymous with 'politics about jazz'. The internal politics of

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[55] In this thesis, I am not concerned with the widely-associated gender discourse that the essential political philosophy of feminism has contested over the decades. Rather, I am interested in the realism of feminist theory and the feminists challenge of the division between the mind and the body.

[56] This of course opens up a number of other fronts in jazz and beyond, among which the insider-outsider debate which points to the selective process of becoming a scholar: one conditioned by the inadequate system of higher institutions, and a situation tied to class, race, gender, and so forth. It highlights the fact that changing circumstances in broader society reduce the access of practising musicians to academia and that few have been accepted enough to make their voices heard, establish and build upon a hermeneutical arc.

[57] It is a similar encompassing perspective of the hierarchy of value based on the division between intellectual and physical labour. Elisabeth Le Guin, *Boccherini''s Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 6.

knowingness and the performative practices that blurred the elastic boundaries between jazz and its space of action were mostly ignored, whilst the bodies that carried, transformed and disseminated these politics in the music scene were mostly disregarded. Scholars formed an acceptable politic of knowledge internal to the field of jazz studies (rather than relational to jazz), one that, in time, seemed like it was concerned with setting the boundaries that defined how jazz was to be conceived and which subjects and musics should be studied; boundaries that in turn afforded varying degrees of legitimation. It was only until recently that the scholarly consensus was that the traditional toolbox of the new jazz studies had been designed for the work of constructing and maintaining a canon of acceptable topics, which could perhaps be labelled more appropriately as a sociology of music, 'a sociology about how musical activity (composition, performance, distribution, reception) is socially shaped' as, in a different context, Tia DeNora maintains.[58]

Too much work has been conducted at that 'wrong level of generality'—to borrow a memorable phrase from Iris Murdoch. We must concentrate our efforts to move the discussion on to a level in which jazz can be portrayed in less general, more musically located terms.[59] I consider this to be a theoretical advance for jazz research; a move with greater nuance in keeping with the musician's practice; a move towards specificity. The value of jazz remains centred in its act of participation and it is perhaps in this spirit of intellectual current that Givan argues: 'without neglecting the manifold other modes of interpretation, we ought to rededicate ourselves to scrutinising musical details and surveying stylistic norms, if only out of respect for musicians' meticulously honed craft and empathy for their lived experience as performers'.[60] Such an epistemological stance can provide a structure upon which we may explore the music's cultural significance; 'we need to hear structure to give our diverse personal interpretations a common orientation', as Tenzer concurs.[61] In fact both authors identify the need to give our studies a common orientation and argue for proximity in

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[58] Ronald G. Welburn, 'New Methods and Classic Concerns', in *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 36.

[59] In her novel *The Good Apprentice*, Iris Murdoch has one of her characters say: 'the modern world is full of theories which are proliferating at a wrong level of generality, we're so good at theorising, and one theory spawns another, there's a whole industry of abstract activity which people mistake for thinking.' Iris Murdoch, *The Good Apprendice*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1985): 139; cited in Tia De Nora, *After Adorno* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 Nov 06).

[60] Givan, 'Gunther Schuller and the Challenge of Sonny Rollins', 229.

[61] Michael Tenzer, 'Introduction: Analysis, Categorisation, and Theory of Music of the World', in *Analytical Studies in World Music*, ed. Michael Tenzer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).cited in Givan, *The Music of Django Reinhardt*, preface.

our practice: proximity towards the craft of jazz in which proximity becomes an epistemological point of departure and return.

This call for specific physical experience has, of course, long been advocated in academic discourse and, as a means of developing understanding, engaged knowledge has its roots in debates concerning the development of knowledge. Philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, for example, rejected the prevailing view of the body in Western philosophies as separate from, and subordinate to, the mind. He argued that mind and body are mutually and continuously co-informing in complex ways, such that the notion of separating them is untenable.[62] Similarly, social theorist Antonio Gramsci explored the relationship between experience and knowledge and argued that: 'The intellectual's error consists in believing that one can know without understanding even without feeling and being impassioned'.[63] Merleau-Ponty and Gramsci pulled the pin on the binary opposition between theory and practice as modes of justifying knowledge, and have exposed the roots of how knowledge is organised in the academy, no less in the microcosmos of jazz studies. Citing Michel De Certau, Dwight Conquerwood has returned to the issue within the context of performance studies and pointed at the chasm between the two routes of knowledge, which takes one official, objective and abstract form and one practical, embodied and popular, what he calls 'the story'.[64] He maintained: 'Marching under the banner of science and reason [the enlightenment project of modernity] has disqualified and repressed other ways of knowing that are rooted in embodied experience, orality and local contingencies'.[65]

But the experiential perspective of the performer and the practicalities of music performance have been important areas of study within ethnomusicology. A first direction is evident in the work of scholars who have demonstrated the wealth of knowledge that can be

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[62] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Colin Smith (London: Routlegde and Kegan Paul): 1962. There is a complex relationship between Merleau-Ponty's arguments and the intellectual foundations of the antinomy between objectivity (musicology) and subjectivity (experience), which as Timothy Rice explains, has been undercut by philosophical and phenomenological hermeneutics as developed in a stream of though from Martin Heidegger to Hans-Georg Gadder and Paul Ricoeur. These thinkers have argued that there can be no objective position from which to view the nature of human affairs, because we are born into a world that gives us the symbols that we come to understand it and our explanations, therefore, are always conditioned by these symbols. Rice argues that, following this line of argument, any attempt to understanding musical experience is a reflexive process, which begins with the self's encounter with musical symbols in the world. Rice, *May it Fill Your Soul*, 3; in striking this pose, Mark Slobin has recently demonstrated the power of using one's autobiography into the scholarly study of the social environment in music. Mark Slobin, 'Improvising a Musical Metropolis: Detroit in the 1940s-1960s.', *Ethnomusicology* 60, No. 1(Winter 2016).

[63] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Note books*, translated by Q. Hoare and G. Smith (New York: International, 1971): 418.

[64] Dwight Conquerwood, 'Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research', *The Drama Review* 46, no. 2 (2002), 145.

[65] Ibid., 146.

achieved through participant observation in what Gregory Barz and Timothy Cooley described as the imperfectly experimental method called fieldwork.[66] Catherina Ingram and Ian Russell also note that during the last fifty years participant observation has flourished and become a fundamental aspect of ethnomusicological research. While it is acknowledged that, as methodology, participation was widely practised by ethnomusicologist John Blacking, Mantle Hood first formally articulated the emphasis on the development of scholarly understanding of music through the researcher taking part in the custodians' musical activities.[67] Like Blacking, who considered important the study of the practicalities of performance (a practice later evidenced in the work of John Baily), the anthropologist Michael Jackson, focusing on fieldwork and observation of ritual actions also called for increased participation in the activities of his industry's research subjects. He argued that, whilst rationalisations of the activities of a given culture by those not directly involved in its working run the risk of badly misrepresenting it, participation in the ritual activity allows researchers crucial insight into the embodied reality and meaning of those activities.[68]

Similarly, Deirdre Sklar supported scholarly participation in the actions of members of a culture to be observed as a means of promoting deeper understanding through kinaesthetic empathy with them—a practice that stimulates kinaesthetic learning—as opposed to rationalising the actions of groups and individuals from a distance.[69] Andrew Mead and Greg Downey demonstrated analogous methodologies, whilst Timothy Cooley and Gregory Barz proposed that there is much to gain by shifting the emphasis away from representation (text) towards experience; a term they believe encapsulates the essence of fieldwork.[70] These works may serve as examples to demonstrate how sociology and cultural anthropology may permit ethnographic work in jazz studies to provide an augmented repertoire of conceptual and methodological resources that, as Born argues, can inform critical discourses and processes without overlooking the surplus of epistemological

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[66] Gregory Bartz and Timothy Cooley, 'Casting Shadows: Fieldwork is Dead! Long Live Fieldwork! Introduction'', in *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, ed. Gregory Bartz and Timothy Cooley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3-4

[67] See John Blacking, 'Eight Flute Tunes from Butembo, East Belgian Congo', *African Music* 1, no. 2 (1955).; John Baily, 'Music Structure and Human Movement', in *Musical Structure and Cognition*, ed. P. Howell I. Cross, and R. West (London: Academic Press, 1985). Ian Russell, and Catherine Ingram, eds. *Taking Part in Music: Case Studies in Ethnomusicology* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 2013).

[68] Michael 327-345 Jackson, 'Knowledge of the Body', *Man* 18, no. 2 (1983).

[69] Sklar Deidre, 'Can Bodylore Be Brought to Its Senses?', *The Journal of American Folklore* 107, no. 423 (1994), 4-22.

[70] Andrew Mead, 'Bodily Hearing: Physiological Metaphors and Musical Understanding', *Journal of Music Theory* 43, no. 1 (1999). Greg Downey, 'Listening to Capoeira: Phenomenology, Embodiment and the Materiality of Music', *Ethnomusicology* 46, no. 3 (2002).

commitments embodied in distinct empiricisms.[71] Noting the tension between ethnomusicology and anthropology, Born explains that anthropologists are more often not led to idealise their subjects because ethnographic fieldwork invariably demands that they confront the full spectrum of human behaviour, from their redemptive, creative and beautiful to the cruel, authoritarian and ugly.[72]

In jazz studies, Paul Berliner's methods, most famously, included participant observation and surveyed how jazz musicians acquire and develop their craftsmanship. In so doing, the author's effort justified his methodologies both in terms of accountability and innovation, as well as in terms of logic of ontology. As Jonathan Stock remarked, readers in ethnography will be able to identify this work as a fine example of realistic tale, in which Berliner assumed the role of knowing narrator and guided the reader through a network of theoretical ideas and practices.[73] One of the main problems in this work, however, is that the author occasionally adhered to a romanticised report of his interviewees and their creative processes, a practice all too familiar in jazz. For instance, on one occasion Berliner maintains that 'in the absence of […] models or goals, it follows that there is no music for improvisers to prepare for performance. Indeed they must perform spontaneously.' Further on he adds: 'Faced with authoritarian definitions that, in effect, describe improvisation in terms of what it is not rather than in terms of what it is, earnest young performers are amazed by the abilities of their idols,' and concludes by posing a rhetorical question on the substance of improvisation: 'They [earnest young performers] ruminate over issues as fundamental as they are intriguing: Precisely what is the music jazz groups perform, and where does it come from?'[74] Whereas Berliner leaves the question as to what improvisation in jazz is and where it comes from unanswered, he does stress that the acquisition of improvisation skills result, largely, from hard work.[75] Although at times Berliner seems to be lacking the tools to interpret the wealth of data he accumulated or, to return to my overarching argument, meditate upon his role as knowing narrator and his influence on both process and product as an ethnographer and/or a jazz musician himself, he achieved a fine balance to make *Thinking*

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[71] Born, 'For a Relational Musicology', 215, 218.

[72] Ibid., 217.; Richard Shweder, *Thinking Through Cultures: Expeditions in Cultural Psychology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[73] Jonathan Stock, "Review Essay: Paul Berliner, Thinking in Jazz: the infinite Art of Improvisation," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 7 (1998): 143.

[74] Paul F. Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 2.

[75] A position defended by Travis Jackson in: Jackson, 'Book Review, *Thinking in Jazz: the infinite art of improvisation*, by Paul F. Berliner', *Oral History Review* 24 no. 2 (1997): 158.

in Jazz one of the first works about jazz accessible to a broader audience; one that includes, scholars, musicians and keen readers.[76] Most importantly, as Stock says, this work brought to our attention that a broader reassessment of alternative modes of musical creativity is long overdue.

The study of the physical aspects of musical performance is of special importance to jazz improvisation and, in this respect, it is remarkable to note this absence in jazz studies. John Murphy already suggested that some of the musical choices made by improvisers may be the product of learning physical motions; alas, little work has followed these footsteps. 'In other words', Murphy argued 'influence in jazz might work as much through motor memory as it does through musical memory'.[77] This idea is not new to ethnomusicologists. A comparison of this 'embodied' consideration with findings in scholarship on the pedagogy and transmission of musical customs in diverse cultures worldwide that are based on improvisation demonstrates that, although some aspects of performance are unique to jazz, others seem to be universal. For example, as early as 1955 Blacking described how Congolese flute players used habitual fingering patterns in performance and made identical observations on African *Kalimba* playing.[78] Similarly, Eric Von Hornbostel suggested that a performer of xylophone music sees a melody as an act of mobility, whilst Bell Yung, working within the umbrella of comparative musicology, noted in his examinations of the physical practicalities of the Chinese *guqin* zither that players experience the performance as a sequence of motions.[79] In this respect, I find it useful to quote a longer passage from Blacking:

> So often, the expressive purpose of a piece of music is to be found through identification with the body movements that generated it, and these in turn may have their origins in culture as much as in the peculiarities of an individual […] Obviously the most deeply felt performance of any piece of music will be that which approaches most closely the feelings of its creator when he began to capture the force of his individual experience with musical form. Since this experience may often

[76] Ibid.,143.

[77] Murphy, 'Jazz Improvisation', 18.

[78] Blacking, 'Eight Flute Tunes from Butembo, East Belgian Congo'; John Blacking, 'Patterns of Nsenga Kalimba Music', *African Music* 2, no. 4 (1961). Kalimba is an instrument of African origin, consisting of a wooden board with attached staggered metal tines to it, played by holding the instrument in the hands and plucking the tines with the thumbs. It is a classified as a lamellaphone and is part of the idiophone family of musical instruments.

[79] Baily, 'Music Structure and Human Movement'. Bell Yung, 'Choreographic and Kinaesthetic Elements in Performance on the Chinese Seven-String Zither', *Ethnomusicology* 28, no. 3 (1984).

> begin as a rhythmical stirring of the body, it may be possible for the performer to recapture the right feeling by finding the right movement.[80]

As the result of similar motivations, Baily described music as the sonic product of action and argued that a performer may represent musical patterns cognitively as movements rather than sound, concluding that 'the activity of music making involves patterned movement in relationship to the active surface of a musical instrument'.[81] Elsewhere, I have made similar observations on the music of Milt Jackson. The vibist's many gifts included a photographic memory and influenced his navigation on an instrument with which visual contact must be maintained almost constantly.[82] Tia DeNora, who emphasised the physicality that music can have, invited us to consider music as gesture and explored the somatic means of musical (re)production. She described music as:

> A prosthetic technology of the body because it provides a resource for configuring motivation and entrainment, enabling the body to do what, without music, it could not do. On the other hand, the bodily movements that music profiles may lead actors to identify, work-up and modulate emotional and motivational states […].[83]

Although the understanding derived through hands-on participation is not always explicit in music studies and it is often treated as a form of what Michel Foucault has identified as subjugated knowledge, this viewpoint has been defended in other areas of study too. Elisabeth Le Guin, for example, has argued that the experience of identification that a performer undergoes when learning to perform a composition functions as a real relationship and that this relationship is essential to the scholarly study of music. She maintained that this relationship should be a primary source of knowledge about a performed work of art and noted that certain qualities of her study of Boccherini's music are solely explicable through the invisible embodied experience of playing it.[84] Le Guin is not alone in highlighting the scholarly underestimation of the value of feeling and experience. Cusick, for example, noted that 'to deny musical meaning to things only the performers of a work will know, implicitly denies that performers are knowers, knowers whose knowledge comes from their bodies and

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[80] John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973).

[81] Baily, 'Music Structure and Human Movement', 237.

[82] Gagatsis, 'Bags Still Grooves'.

[83] Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 106-07.

[84] Le Guin, *Boccherinis Body*, 14. I ought, however, to disagree with Le Guin when she sets out the two hermeneutical paths she followed, the two 'roughly paralleled' identities of musicologist and musician, as I argue throughout that these should rather meet at a point of intersection, both towards a state of synthesis rather than of separation.

their minds'.[85] Le Guin's carnal musicology, as much as Cusick's feminist music theory, refuses to leave out the whole realm of complex and nuanced meaning that is embodied, hidden but tacit, intoned, gestured, improvised and co-experienced simply because it refuses to be articulated with the available modes of critical analysis. Equally, David Lidov proposed that 'music is significant only if we identify perceived sonorous motion with somatic experience', and that music bears significance 'if and only if' its capacity to convey somatic experience is understood.[86] In my examination of Jackson's improvisations, I have identified with specific parameters of the music as these are documented in recordings: the most obvious are the musical qualities of the improvised line. Reproducing certain aspects of those recorded solos has highlighted certain hidden aspects of the bodily positioning during the solo.[87]

These statements make a radical departure from some formal approaches to musical content in suggesting that a non-formal element (the bodily motion) may account for the felt significance of sound. Several scholars have also emphasised the importance of engaged learning and specifically the kinaesthetic learning that results from somatic modes of understanding. One such example is the work of David Sudnow, whose auto-ethnographic account of his own acquisition of improvisational skills on the piano accounts how in the early stages of learning to improvise he developed pathways to facilitate his navigation through different harmonic contexts, linking therefore the physical aspects of understanding to a more theoretical level.[88] If Sudnow's and Blacking's work is deemed significant in documenting the entry levels of performance then, like Le Guin, one must expect that in more elaborate melodic constructs scholars must deploy all available means of understanding. In this respect, Micheal Chanan extended Roland Barthes' emphasis on the importance of *musica practica*, of acknowledging that the way listeners perceive music is determined by whatever bodily knowledge they have of producing music.[89] Barthes spoke of 'a muscular music in which the part taken by the sense of hearing is only one of ratification, as though the

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[85] Cusick, 'Feminist Theory, Music Theory and the Mind/body Problem', 16.

[86] David Lidov, 'Mind and Body in Music', *Semiotica* 66, no. 1/3 (1987), 70.

[87] Gagatsis, 'Bags Still Grooves'; Alexander Gagatsis, 'Speaking the Sound: Schema Theory and Jazz Improvisation Explored in the Music of Milt Jackson', *Musicology Research: Music as Creative Process and Creative Product: Explorations through Analysis, Composition and Performance* 1(Autumn 2016).

[88] David Sudnow, *Ways of the Hand: A Rewritten Account* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001), 21-35.

[89] Michael Chanan, *Musica Practica: The Social Practice of Western Music from Gregorian Chant to Postmodernism* (London and New York: Verso, 1996), 27. Roland Barthes, 'Musica Practica', in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977).

body were hearing'.[90] Chanan cites evidence from neuroscience to argue that Barthes' *musica practica* is essentially musical knowledge deriving from musical practice.[91] Of course, this is not to suggest that musical knowledge may only derive from musical practice; musical meaning is, after all, not solely ground to the physical senses but constantly redefined in a sort of kaleidoscope of experience.[92]

Benjamin Givan's methodological direction pursues a path forged from the earlier days of jazz, and is impressive. Givan's *The Music of Django Reinhardt* is the kind of work that amounts to a growing interdisciplinary and reflexive movement in the form of an interrogation of the historical constitution by musical expertise. Givan offers an analytical study of Reinhardt's music and his instrumental technique and examines how one of the most important guitarists in jazz's formative years developed. At first, he takes a turn into medical terminology to explain how Reinhardt's accident affected his left arm. Here, at the centre of Givan's enquiry, is a consideration of Reinhardt's playing from the practical perspective of the performing guitarist, for the author seeks to understand how Reinhardt adapted his playing needs to fit his injury. For the discussion of Reinhardt's playing style and how it developed Givan relies broadly on Schenkerian analysis to demonstrate how his music derives unity from long-range voice leading, as well as recognition of formulae. The author, however, doesn't seem restricted by the analytical methods he employs but rather adapts these in a versatile way that serves his pursuit; on the contrary, the most salient information in this volume may be the analytical process itself as Givan investigates the physical processes that constitute a musical improvisation and, by positioning himself into the analytical process, is able to comment on what the relationship between Reinhardt's disfigured hands might have been in performance. Although the volume is enriched with transcriptions of solos, this method differs from a purely score-based analysis.

An analogous methodology is demonstrated by Marko Aho, who examined gypsy swing music as a medium for virtuosic gestures from the physical perspective of the performing musician. Aho plays the musical passages he employed in aid of his argument in

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[90] Ibid., 149.

[91] Chanan, *Musica Practica*, 28.

[92] In this respect, Berkowitz's explanation of the difference between productive and perceptual competence is useful. Perceptual competence defines the knowledge base of the language (musical or other) whilst performance describes the use of that knowledge. See: Aaron L. Berkowitz, *The Improvising Mind: Cognition and Creativity in the Musical Moment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 97-118.

a series of video clips accompanying his text.[93] Although the argument is not explicitly made, Aho transforms his body into an analytical vessel (what Le Guin calls carnal musicology), to examine a virtuosic passage. Like Givan's, Aho's work is an example of how the placing of one's body in analysis can assist the understanding of the performative practices in jazz, but also be innovative in interpreting the historical past. It is also a method of viewing music as a dynamic object in which the body is considered, not only as a sound object. These works, each in their different social and musical worlds, show (to borrow Amanda Kemp's memorable phrase) the usage of performance 'both as a way of knowing and as a way of showing.'[94]

I want to take the issues raised in a slightly different direction than the authors from whom I have quoted thus far. I want to stress the lack of commitment to embodied lived experience in jazz studies, what this absence signifies and how it constitutes a political act in itself, as well as how it withholds from us a deeper understanding of the modes of creativity with which jazz art has been bounded. I argue that *now's the time* to cast doubts on the dominant conceptual boundaries that have underpinned the hegemony of jazz studies but, even more, that it is now appropriate to move beyond the established discipline. Although, as Born argues, popular music studies is among those disciplines acknowledged to have transformed our conception of what the musical object is by bringing the bodies that mediate musical experience into the frame, I argue that in jazz studies this dimension has neither been sufficiently recognised nor sufficiently exercised in its intensifying dialogue with musicology.[95] As such, and to paraphrase Born, it is in the relative legitimacy and therefore institutional presence accorded to the new jazz studies that the politics of music scholarship and the reproduction of hegemony were most evident in the 1990s and that I come to question today. One of my purposes in this thesis is to point at a methodology that has the potential to expand the disciplinary horizons and highlight the work of those scholars who have reimagined the boundaries that underpinned the hegemony of the new jazz studies.

Moreover, any configuration of the 'newer "new" jazz studies', and the redistribution of legitimacy in our methods necessitates, as Born argues, 'the presentation of cogent and compelling intellectual and creative justifications for a redistribution of attention to new

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[93] Marko Aho, 'Gypsy Swing as a Medium for Virtuosic Gestures'. *Ethnomusicology Review* 18 (2013), published online http://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/journal/volume/18/piece/696 (accessed 1 April 2016).

[94] Amanda Denise Kemp, 'This Black Body in Question', In *The Ends of Performance*, edited by Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane, 116–29 (New York: New York University Press, 1998): 116.

[95] Born, 'For a Relational Musicology', 219.

objects of study, new perspectives on old disciplinary objects, and new conceptual and methodological resources relevant to all musics'.[96] Born maintained that, while such a move springs from 'a self-conscious dialogue with criticism of, or opposition to, the intellectual, aesthetic, ethical or political limits' of the canon, it also implies 'a transposition of Chantal Mouffe's stress on antagonism as constitutive of the political onto the plane of the politics of knowledge'.[97] Such a move does not *a priori* imply a conflict between the emergent and the established scholarship but rather advocates the need for scholars to adopt new practices to transcend the given epistemological and ontological foundations of jazz studies and, as creative members of an orthodoxy, eventually outgrow the discipline. In a similar intellectual current, both Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist have called for an accommodation between established methodologies and new horizons, and a musicology of the provisional that challenges its own disciplinary past.[98]

The question at hand is: do we reshape the foundations of our system in order to allow practising musicians to appropriate themselves into the scholars' world, whilst asking for scholars to learn the ways of 'being-in-the world' (as Martin Heidegger argues) of jazz, to disappropriate themselves in order to appropriate our subject of enquiry?[99] Propositions such as this are often assumed to have no answer because they invoke something we all regard as untouchable; yet, they are not meant to be triumphantly rhetorical. Making the study of jazz more relational to the practice of musicians sounds self-evidently sensible and yet it is from the musicians' practice that the serious study of jazz should first of all derive. We are called therefore, to situate our theorising on their praxis. But for now this idea brings me back to the opening paragraph of this section and my conclusion of this opening statement: as scholars of a music that is very much alive, we must finally accept that it is impossible to separate our own subjectivity from the reality which we try to understand and that, as such, it is necessary to place ourselves among our subjects of enquiry, to better understand and represent jazz.[100]

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[96] Ibid., 208.

[97] Ibid., 211

[98] Nicholas Cook, and Mark Everist, eds. *Rethinking Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1999). preface. Of course, another burgeoning conviction is evident in jazz studies the last 20 years or so that the discipline must overturn it philological-historicist stance and begin to address musics of the present.

[99] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarie and Edward Robinson (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1978).

[100] A position advocated among other by Michel Serres, *Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy*, edited by Josué V. Harari and David F Bell (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983). Quoted in: Born, 'For a Relational Musicology', 209. The epistemological illusion of objective knowledge Donna Haraway names as "the god trick"; Donna Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective', *Feminist Studies* (1988), 587.

In a similar spirit, Nietzsche argued that a philosopher's system of thought always arises from his autobiography; I, therefore, make my subject of enquiry, jazz, part of my autobiography too to avoid theorising in a cultural void.[101]

[101] This chapter has submitted for review to the *Journal of Popular Music Studies* as a bibliographic essay. The reviewer has kindly pointed me towards scholarship that has begun to address some of the issues which I discuss in this chapter (Kwami Coleman, Steve Lehman, Sherrie Tucker, Alex Rodriguez, Nina Eidsheim, Jairo Moreno, Vijay Iyer). For example, see Vijay Iyer, 'Exploding the Narrative in Jazz Improvisation', in *Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies*, ed. Robert G. O'Meally, *et al.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

3 JAZZ PERSPECTIVES: DETROIT'S EAST SIDE, CHURCH AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Eric Lott has noted that one cannot absorb the philosophy, style and politics of the bebop phenomenon 'without its social reference', nor understand 'New York at that time without consulting the music'.[1] Similarly, digging deeper into the place of jazz music in Detroit yields new insights into the Motor City's milieu, as much as paying greater attention to Detroit expands the social geography of jazz music. Taking my cue from the above formulations, in this chapter I focus on a generational cohort of Detroiter jazz instrumentalists who created a musically rigorous scene in the 1940s and 1950s, exploring how musical developments were the result of collective work, improvisation and competition, but also from musicians educating each other. To do so I examine the microcosm of Jackson's family life and his schooling in Detroit, as well as the city's wider music scene, adding new evidence to illuminate a critical period and place in African American cultural history that paved the way for new forms of black music.

In this pursuit, community becomes a powerful lens through which to view black Detroit. Although within the history of jazz music, historian Robert Kelley notes, there is 'a general inability to recognise "community"—a musician's community, a dancer's community, an African American's community, and various overlapping communities that make up the world of jazz', Detroit tells a rather different story.[2] It is a testament to black Detroit that so many talented musicians were raised in musical homes, growing up in nurturing communities playing Gospel music in church and beginning to work professionally with bands at a young age. Although, for the most part, Detroit enters African American cultural history through the entrepreneurial figure of Barry Gordy and his successful black capitalist enterprise, the Motown Record Company, Detroit has much to reveal about jazz as a communal act. Contemporary research has exposed indispensable educational networks anchored in black Detroit's contemporary infrastructure, woven into the cultural and social fabric of the city.[3] The music programmes in the city's public schools, detailed in later sections, seem exceptional compared to contemporaneous standards. These forged a strong

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[1] Eric Lott, 'Double V, Double Time: Bebop's Politics of Style', *Calladoo* 36(1988), 597.

[2] Robin D. G. Kelley, 'In a Mist: Thoughts on Ken Burn's Jazz', *The Institute for Studies in American Music Newsletter* 30(2001), 2.

[3] Anthony Macías, 'Detroit Was Heavy: Modern Jazz, Bebop and African American Expressive Culture', *The Journal of African American History* 95, no. 1 (2010), 54.

foundation of players and audiences alike, paving the way for the Detroit piano school, the many successful jazz artists, as well as the later Motown sounds. A support system of more experienced mentor-musicians and visiting artists, from blues and swing musicians to the bravura beboppers, kept Detroit connected to the broader jazz world.

In the following sections, I attempt to set up a wide enough frame for weaving several theoretical, methodological and intellectual concerns: ethnographic perspectives, historicism, cultural memory, practice theory and self-reflexivity, among other tools to engage with musical analysis, interpretation and criticism. I do so partly because I trust in exploring the historical value of Jackson's profile. His family narrative and the numerous other cultural spaces that I discuss highlight a sensibility that undoubtedly shaped Jackson's approach, both as a person and then as a musician. As Ramsey has noted, such methodology leads to the kind of interpretation that allows readers to enter some important ideas about the 'cultural work' performed by music in the processes of African American identity making.[4] It must be noted, however, that my intent is not to present this account as merely biographical. Instead, I hope to present and examine where possible the ways in which historical energies have constellated in the music for which Jackson was so renowned, and to postulate how reading Jackson's music through different modes of emphasis might expand our understanding of the cultural work in which he and his peers were engaged.

3.1 Jackson's Early Life

Born in Detroit on New Year's Day 1923, the second of five boys, Walter Milt Jackson belongs to a generation of musicians whose search for roots was long and hard, Dan Morgenstern noted. And yet, 'Jackson always seemed in possession of his'.[5] When Dizzy Gillespie was asked why this might be, he offered: 'Milt? Why, man, he's sanctified'.[6] Jon Faddis's observation complements well that of Gillespie: 'Milt is both as down-to-earth and bluesy as one of his nicknames, Bags, suggests. And he's as dignified and elegant as a Sunday preacher—as his other nickname, "the Reverend", testifies'.[7] In an interview with Patrick Roulet, Sandra Jackson noted that it was drummer Mickey Rocker who gave Jackson

[4] Guthrie P Ramsey, *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop* (Berkeley and London: Univ of California Press, 2003), 4.

[5] Dan Morgenstern, 'Bags Groove', *Downbeat* (1958 Nov 27), 17.

[6] Ibid. The quotation has often been paraphrased; DeMicheal reports that Gillespie's words were 'where Bags gets his rhythm is that his family is sanctified'. DeMicheal, 'Jackson of the MJQ', 17.

[7] Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 298.

the nickname 'the Reverend' because his solos were like preaching.[8] Aside from the playful anecdote—of which a plethora exist in jazz with respect to Jackson—the nickname most often used as a title for Christian clergy, but here as an adjective suggesting solemn respect, was applied to define a spirituality that was perceived as enriching Jackson's achieved identity. Several of his compositions, such as 'The Martyr' or the title of his album *The Prophet Speaks*, have reverberations in the African American Church. These nicknames were drenched in Afro-modernist sensibilities. They codified a specific moment of urbanity for African Americans which I discuss at later stages in this thesis.

Jackson remarked that he didn't come from a musical family, but at first glance his parents seem responsible for his first major musical influences in life. Music in his church emphasised the transmission of an African American heritage and met head-on with music in his family life during his childhood: 'Why, that's where it all started', the vibist himself observed.[9] The Jacksons lived over the church as well, in 648 Adelaide street in Detroit, Jackson noted.[10] His father, Manley, a deacon in the church, was self-taught on the guitar and the piano. His mother, Lillie-Beaty Jackson, is also reported to have had knowledge of the keyboard instrument.[11] The vibist often highlighted the importance of his father's guitar (his first instrument) and his mother's fondness for gospel music as preeminent influences on his development:

> My father's guitar would be sitting in the corner and my mother would be cooking a steak, which was a rarity in those days for a black family. And she would take that hammer and would be hitting the steak to tenderize it, and I would use the rhythm from the hammer to solo on the guitar. That's how I got started.[12]

Having a photographic memory, Jackson recalled that this imagery was also the way in which he learned how to cook.

The Jacksons seemed to have more resources than many of their African American counterparts in Detroit's East Side (his fellow musician, Eli Lucky Thompson, being a contrasting example); yet the vibist remembered that when he was young piano lessons were

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[8] Roulet, 'Milt Jackson', 87.

[9] DeMicheal, 'Jackson of the MJQ', 19.

[10] Transcription of an interview with Arthur Dawkins for the 'Howard University Jazz Oral History Project', http://dh.howard.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=hujohp_transcripts (accessed 11 December 2017), 5. Jackson was correct in his recollection as there was indeed a COGIC church in the address above. See Sherry S DuPree, *African-American Holiness Pentecostal Movement: An Annotated Bibliography*, (Abington, Oxon: Routledge, 2013 [1996]), 237.

[11] Roulet, 'Milt Jackson', 2.

[12] Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 300-01.

quickly discontinued due to economic hardship.[13] Jackson recalled that he took private lessons between the ages of eleven and twelve.[14] While it is difficult to determine the exact role of music within the family—Jackson recalled that his parents never wanted him to become a professional musician—Manley and Lillie-Beaty supported the young Jackson's development in a number of different ways. When Jackson's musical inclinations were perhaps more apparent, his father was the one who bought his son a vibraphone at the age of sixteen, paying $130 for it.[15] The Jacksons finally came to terms with their son's choice of career when he turned up for dinner one day with Ella Fitzgerald, the vibist jokingly recalled.[16]

3.2 Made in America: The Blues, the Gospel, and the Church of God in Christ

> Before the church really accepted gospel music, [people] were saying it wasn't nothing but the blues—playing the blues and stuff in the church—especially the older heads. But of course it didn't phase [faze] me one way or the other. I enjoyed playing. Whatever they said play, I'd play it and get enjoyment out of it. I never thought to compare whether this is right for church, because the music carries words or praises. It's still gospel music, whether it's an anthem or spirituals. It's still the gospel being sung.[17]
>
> Mabel Mitchel Hamilton Davis

Blues and gospel are widely known as generic labels, and have extensive histories as influential forms of music.[18] Although they constitute distinctive genres, it is necessary to

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[13] In an interview with Christopher Kuhl, Thompson (originally born in Columbia, South Carolina but moved to Detroit soon after his birth) remembered that, although music was constantly present in his neighbourhood, his father could not afford to buy him an instrument. His first attempt at learning music was on a broomstick on which he carved keys of a saxophone. He noted that he had enough money to buy a saxophone book and practised fingerings this way. Christopher Kuhl, 'Lucky Thompson: Interview, Part I' *Cadence* (January 1982): 10; Lars Björn and Jim Gallert, *Before Motown: A History of Jazz in Detroit, 1920–-60* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 82-83.; in similar spirit, Yusef Lateef is said to have bought his saxophone by selling junk. Yusef Lateef, *The Gentle Giant: The Autobiography of Yusef Lateef* (Irvington, NJ: Morton Books, 2005), 16.

[14] Alyn Shipton, *Groovin' High: The Life of Dizzy Gillespie* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 239.

[15] Ibid. 19. Also see Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 301.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Mabel Mitchel Hamilton Davis interview, Chicago (22 January 1977). Quoted in Michael W. Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues: The Music of Thomas Andrew Dorsey in the Urban Church* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 206.

[18] Despite the generic labels gospel' or 'black gospel' music, I do not wish to inforce essentialist notions of music in the 'black church'. I am aware that diversities exists among black people in America, multiple styles of musical worship employed by US-born blacks. Melvyn Butler explains that '"Inter-group diversity" […] refers to the multiple styles that are found among the various groups of black people who, although they see themselves as culturally distinct from each other, all self-identity as "black" in the context of a white American

acknowledge their deep linkage, as Davis, from whom I have quoted in the epigraph above, tells us. In Christopher Small's succinct take.

> It has been said that if gospel is the present-day paradigm of Afro-American religious musicking, so blues is of secular. It would be more true to say that blues and gospel are twin modern aspects of that ritual of survival which is the musical act […] there is a good deal of quite secular enjoyment of both spirituals and gospel music, so in blues […] there is a strong element of what can only be called religious.[19]

The division between the blues and the gospel has never been clear cut. What is certain, however, is that at some moment in African American history both genres represented strategies of coping. Although in further chapters I describe several instances when musicians were prohibited to perform both in church and in secular settings, the function of blues as entertainment and of the gospel in ecclesiastical settings was not always where the boundary between the two was laid. Instead, Allan Moore suggests that the boundary lies with a difference of taste.[20] In this respect, it is useful to remember that blues musicians were among the most mobile in African American cultural history and were highly influential to the development of styles; as was from the 1920s onwards the marketing of African American blues recordings, via newspaper ads in the *Chicago Defender* (which circulated widely in the South). But even behind specific geographical labels we encounter terms such as 'urban blues', 'rural blues', 'country blues', and 'post-war blues', among many others, some of which have very little significance to performers. There also exist the anthropological designs of communities in which styles and ideas were shared and formed to accompany specific circumstances. This is also observed in gospel music. Several schisms in the Church for example resulted in the fusion of practices. In this section I want to offer a brief history of the development of the Church of God in Christ, whilst offering an introduction to the music and religious setting that Jackson was exposed to in his youth. In so doing I identify a moment and context in which the interaction between the blues, jazz and gospel music was mutually transformative.

Founded in Tennessee in the late 1890s by the former Baptist minister Charles H. Mason as the result of conflict within the black Baptist community, the Church of God in

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majority'. See Melvin L. Buttler, 'Musical Style and Experience in a Brooklyn Pentecostal Church: An "insider'S" Perspective', *Current Musicology* 70(2000), 4.

[19] Quoted in Allan F. Moore, 'Surveying the Field: Our Knowledge of Blues and Gospel Music', in *The Cambridge Companion to Blues and Gospel Music*, ed. Allan F. Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

[20] Ibid., 8.

Christ (COGIC) is a Christian organisation in the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition and the largest Black Christian denomination in the world with several million members. COGIC sought to reclaim the doctrine of distinctive spiritual sanctification. After testifying to being sanctified, members of the church referred to themselves as 'the Saints', believing that they were set apart to live a daily life of Christian Holiness in words and deeds.[21] In 1906, Mason attended the pivotal Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, California, citing the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the source of his speaking in tongues. Mason imposed this practice on his church and consequently a large flock withdrew, forming the Church of Christ (Holiness), U.S.A. This schism, Edward Robinson explains, proves the uncertainty troubling many African Americans over theological concerns which typified the religious disarray common in the black South.[22]

In the 1930s, almost every African American community had its own acapella group, which would perform in both religious contexts as well as in the popular gospel singing contexts widely held in the 1930s and after. Aside from the presence of music at home, Jackson was a member of one such acapella group, the Evangelist Singers. The group was one of the two leading gospel groups in Detroit at the time, the other being the Flying Clouds. Jackson performed with the Evangelist Singers every Sunday at Elders Morton's Church of God in Christ in Windsor, Canada – a mere seven miles from downtown Detroit.[23] An important part of Windsor's Black heritage, Mt. Zion Church of God in Christ is associated with Bishop Clarence Leslie Morton Sr. Founder of the Canadian and International Churches of God in Christ, Bishop Morton was instrumental in the building of five churches in Ontario and had the leadership of six churches in the United States. He was famous for his radio broadcasts and old-fashioned river baptisms, which drew thousands of worshippers to Windsor every year during the 1940s and 1950s. The first Black minister to conduct a radio broadcast on Windsor's CKLW, Elder Morton and his Radio Chorus aired twice weekly beginning in 1936. After 30 years, the popular programme moved to WGPR in Detroit. Although membership in Mt. Zion declined after Bishop Morton founded the Greater Mt. Zion Tabernacle in Detroit in 1955, the church continues with a multi-racial congregation.

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[21] Ithiel C. Clemmons, *Bishop C. H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ.* (Lanham, Maryland: Pneuma Life Publishing, 1996), 10.

[22] Edward J. Robinson, and Harrell, David Edwin, *Show Us How You Do it: Marshall Keeble and the Rise of Black Churches of Christ in the United States, 1914-1968* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), 101.

[23] Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 301.

The Mortons were one of COGIC's church dynasty families, a group of talented preachers and singers in the black Holiness tradition which they continue to perform until today. [24]

Performances in this ecclesiastical setting generated a generous income for Jackson, and on a weekly basis. 'They'd take up the collection and I would make about $16. That was a lot of money in those days', Jackson recalled.[25] His brother, Alvin (a bass player who recorded with him on several occasions), explained that there was a five-piece band in church at Windsor called the Powerhouse for which his father played guitar. Alvin and Milt Jackson would regularly perform together in church. Alvin commented: 'I sang and Milt played the piano or the guitar; we were known as the Jackson brothers […] we were singing in all the churches all over the city'.[26] Jackson's reputation as a genius—in Ellington's playful definition of being in the right place at the right time, as Palmer noted—had already started forming from the vibist's childhood years and in these contexts.[27] Alvin remembered that Jackson 'won a contest at 10 years old at the Plymouth Congregational Church for $10. He happened to win playing the organ which he had never played before'.[28] Jackson's family and church, the two most important institutions in African American life catapulted Jackson into prominence.

I do not wish to challenge the reality of genius; more than anything, it described an accepted social fact and an idea rich in meaningful effect. People trusted in the concept of genius and, in music at least, a considerable amount of cultural capital has been already invested in those who fit the characterisation. Jackson's was among the many African

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[24] For more information see internet source: 'Historic Places: Mount Zion Church of God in Christ' http://historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=8522 (accessed 11 October 2017). I have contacted CKLW and CBC radio stations trying to find archives and any surviving material from these broadcast, in which Jackson sung, but changes in the radio station's name and relocations make it difficult to determine whether any such documents exist. Although I have been unsuccessful in locating recordings or historical information about the Evangelist Singers, an artist biography of the group the Detroiters suggests that the group was founded as the Evangelist Singers by Oliver Green, in 1938. The group was assumedly renamed for commercial purposes. The Flying Clouds however did record; their repertoire ranged from hymns reminiscent of African American hollers of the previous century, to more popular jubilee harmony. Surviving material serves as an example as to how the Evangelist Singers may have sounded. The Flying Clouds' repertoire included perhaps the most popular version of Dorsey's 'Peace in the Valley', which may be listened to here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWhfwlpLhpQ (accessed 9 November 2017). The Flying Clouds broadcasted regularly for CKLW to background for Elder Morton's Wednesday midnight programme. I managed to trace a Sunday morning broadcast for CKLW (dating from September 1942), which can be listened to here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWhfwlpLhpQ (accessed 9 November 2017). Jackson noted that the Flying Clouds performed the first part of the program whilst they sang in the second. Transcription of an interview with Arthur Dawkins for the 'Howard University Jazz Oral History Project', 52.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Alvin Jackson interviewed by Bjorn and Gallert in: Björn and Gallert, *Before Motown*, 83.

[27] Richard Palmer, 'Milt Jackson Reconsidered, Part I', *Jazz Journal* 63/1(January 2010), 7.

[28] Jackson interviewed by Björn and Gallert Björn and Gallert, *Before Motown*, 83.

American, male musicians who were praised for their special abilities in music; his designation of 'genius' was connected to a powerful set of ideals that he seemed to possess. His work with modernist musicians, for example, was presumed as cultural production that transcended the limits of political, social and everyday world. His social status as a young, male African American musician, his subsequent engagement with the 'baroque type music' as he termed it, the specifics of African American culture, the particularities of his social milieu and, of course, his exceptional abilities in music, all factored prominently into his distinction.[29] But, as Ramsey similarly notes about pianist Bud Powell, these elements 'anchor him, rather than lift him out of, his specific time, place and social circumstance'.[30] In other words, Jackson's designation as genius situates him firmly in a historical circumstance that is best understood by exploring the interaction among specific social actors, cultural structures, and social orders.

The lyrical and musical content of the Church of God in Christ services and their practice in a specific historical moment and geographic setting have important implications for the criticism of Jackson's musical outputs, as well as the discussion of the later Motown sounds that emerged in Detroit. The musically mediated pacing of the COGIC service somehow distinguished this style of worship from others. 'Emphasizing music in religious services', Morgenstern noted, 'this group can transmit musical heritage in living terms'.[31] Music combined with teaching and other modes of socialisation to create community because of the strong sense of tradition and the higher purpose of evangelising the world. Gospel music was a way to build community and an approach that favoured individuality within a group. Services were marked by a hybridity that defined the development of many African American religious practices since their appearance in North America. Accounts describing the ring shout, for example, were prominent in the literature of missionaries, travellers, abolitionists and other commentators. Readers may be wary of my strategy to link in a seemingly ahistorical way the ring shout with a Depression-era description of COGIC services. But the list of characteristics that are described move across linguistic, musical, bodily and other modes of expression that have customarily defined black culture. Services typically combined movements, storytelling, singing and shouting within the context of a Christian service delivered in English. Church goers mingled a dramatic way of presentation

[29] Page, 'Open Bags: An Interview with Milt Jackson.', 18.

[30] Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 94.

[31] Morgenstern, 'Bags Groove', 17.

and mimicry among a plethora of expressions. In many respects, we can see why reports positioned the ecclesiastical community as a collision of European and African practices.

Hybridity has always been a part of the background and pedigree of African American culture and, in this respect, it is no surprise to read accounts of the syncretism that occurred in such expressive contexts.[32] Gospel music and the community within which it occurred served as a reservoir for innovations that intended to highlight diachronic values within synchronic events. Gospel music is dynamic, continually evolving up to the present day, and the result of a consolidation of sensibilities that can be traced to both Europe and Africa. Although the congruency between the ring shout and Gospel music may be less clear, the meaning that Gospel music generated depended on contingencies tied to historically and geographically situated participants. If anything, like other cultural products tied to African American culture, sanctified music showed affinities with jazz in terms of its multi-ethnic origins and integrating capabilities. One such example was Thomas Dorsey's black folk preaching performances, perhaps one of the best models of mixing the blues with preaching and the gospel into semi-melodic, or sometimes even non-melodic, oral declarations.[33]. Jackson's feeling for the blues, his organ-like approach to the vibraphone, his singing vibrato and the intangible 'soul' that distinguished his playing, were often traced to the mosaic of sounds that were in play in these ecclesiastical settings. Years later, when pressed on this point in an interview the vibist offered: 'I believe that what I heard and felt in the music of my church—I went until I was full-grown—was the most powerful influence on my musical career'.[34] It is only fair to assume that references to Jackson as 'sanctified' or 'the Reverend' were also made with regards to Jackson's religious practice.

[32] It is also important to note that, although elements of black vernacular music may be traced to a central pool of cultural resources that the transplanted slaves brought with them, the various kinds of African American cultural expressions maintained distinct conventions and profiles.

[33] Originally from Villa Rica, Georgia, but brought up in Atlanta, Dorsey studied composition at the Chicago School of Composition and Arranging in 1915. He played in clubs under the working names of 'Texas Tommy', Barrelhouse Tom' and Georgia Tom' and worked as a piano accompanist to blues singers Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith. He is considered as the 'father' of black gospel music; his freeform style became prominent in African American culture and can be witnessed many years later in the music of James Brown or, more recently, in modern hip hop music. Written in Chicago in 1932, following the death of his wife Nettie and infant son during childbirth, Dorsey's most celebrated composition was perhaps 'Precious Lord'. He can be heard singing 'Take my Hand, Precious Lord' as a fine example of what I describe here. Thomas Dorsey. *Precious Lord Recordings of the Great Gospel Songs of Thomas A. Dorsey* (Columbia CK 57164), 1994. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HNZNvlhlN4 (accessed 21 September 2017).

[34] Milt Jackson, *Plenty, Plenty Soul,* Atlantic 1269, 1957, LP, Liner notes by Nat Hentoff.

3.3 Miller High

Jackson attended Sydney D. Miller High School. The first in the city with a majority black student body, Miller High provided outstanding music courses that included classical and swing student bands. Not by accident, then, the roster of jazz musicians educated within the school's walls was impressive and included bass player Alvin Jackson, tenor saxophonists Lorenzo Lawson and Yusef Lateef, trombonist Frank Rosolino (the Lemon Drop Kid), drummer Art Madigan, trumpeter Mathew Rucker, pianist Willie Anderson, and the brothers Kenny and Billy Burrell, both guitarists.[35] By the age of 16 Jackson had already been playing the xylophone and marimba with the high school's band. Alvin Jackson remembered that

> We would play for the other schools for dances, and we'd get paid $7. As a 14-piece dance band we would travel to the other schools, so actually we were professional all through school […] Milt played the xylophone in school; when my father bought him some vibes he could carry around, that's what he played with Art Madigan all around these clubs.[36]

The band was led by one of the school's music teachers, Mexican American Louis Cabrera, who has been credited with encouraging his students to gain practical experience performing in clubs, ensuring performances would give students credits to be applied towards their classwork.

Kenny Burrell stressed the importance of Cabrera in their development. He explained that 'not only did he [Cabrera] furnish us with a thorough grounding in the academic aspects of music, but he also provided us with the philosophy that our music should be a paying thing'.[37] In his autobiography Yusef Lateef also credited Cabrera for passing to the class some of his father's Spanish compositions to learn, bringing into the picture that 'Spanish tinge' that Jelly Roll Morton had listed as an element of good jazz right from its birth.[38] Cabrera explained to his students the financial aspect of their craft, warning them against exploitation by club owners, and drawing on personal experiences to overcome such

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[35] At the time of his high school years Lateef was on alto. Lateef changed his family name to William Huddleston to the stage name Bill Evans and changed it again in 1950 after converting to the Ahmadiyya sect of Islam. The Nation of Islam, founded in Detroit's Paradise Valley in 1931 had already gained many adherents by 1953 when Malcom X became the assistant minister of the Nation of Islam's Detroit Temple One. The discipline and dignified Black Muslims represented a more explicitly political corollary to the jazz artists' activities. For more information see Macías, 'Detroit Was Heavy'. and Lateef, *The Gentle Giant*.

[36] Björn and Gallert, *Before Motown*, 83.

[37] Lewis K. McMillan, 'Kenny Burrell: Man with a Mission', *Downbeat* 38(June 1971), 12.

[38] The 'Spanish tinge' is a phrase quoted from Jelly Roll Morton's Library of Congress recordings. It is, broadly, a reference to an Afro-Latin rhythmic sensibility when playing in 4//4. Morton, "Jelly Roll" (1938: Library of Congress Recording) *The Complete Recordings By Alan Lomax*.

obstacles. He would also employ selected pupils to perform in professional engagements.[39] When alumni visited Detroit, such as Milt Jackson in later years, he invited them to perform with the young generations of Miller's music students.[40] As Anthony Macías notes, the relationship between Cabrera and his students also shows the presence of Mexican Americans and of African American-Mexican American dialogue and cooperation in Detroit, which in turn nudges jazz history beyond a black and white analysis.[41] In this section I describe similar examples that demonstrate how several members of staff became mentors to students, providing informal apprentices with musical, intellectual and spiritual support and paving the way to their development in respected musical circles.

Legend has it that Jackson, gifted with perfect pitch among his many talents, picked up the vibraphone on his school teacher's recommendation to keep himself occupied, for he had finished the music curriculum before everyone else.[42] He remembered that:

> When I was a kid I could hear the music faster than other kids in school could read it. Therefore it was like a handicap to me, to have to sit there watching them look at the paper while I had it in my head and could play it. In fact, a lot of times the teacher would have to get me to play it for them so they could figure out what it was they were reading.[43]

Pressed on this point in an interview with Marian McPartland, Jackson recalled that he also played timpani in the school's orchestra, the 'Bar City Orchestra', and second violin in the junior orchestra.[44] Reports of who introduced Jackson to the vibraphone are contradicting. Lateef remembered that it was Cabrera who encouraged Jackson to adopt the instrument, as did Jackson in many occasions. Below, the vibist is quoted as crediting the head of the music faculty, Morris Goldenberg, for introducing him to the xylophone.

> Mr Moris Goldenberg and Mr Louis Cabrera were my music instructors, and they were very good men. Mr Goldenberg got me started playing the vibes. He actually

[39] Kenny Burrell, telephone interview with Anthony Macias (12 January 2010). Cited in Macías, 'Detroit Was Heavy', 53.

[40] McMillan, 'Kenny Burrell', 12.

[41] Macías, 'Detroit Was Heavy', 52.

[42] Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 301.

[43] Peter Danson, 'Milt Jackson', *Coda Magazine* 177(1981), 5.

[44] Marian McPartland, 'Milt Jackson on Piano Jazz', (1991): http://www.npr.org/2013/01/07/168786059/milt-jackson-on-piano-jazz (accessed 25 August 2017).

> got me started on an old xylophone which the school owned, and I later switched to the vibes.[45]

Jackson's involvement with the vibraphone may have been a stroke of serendipity—the vibraphone was not yet a mainstream instrument in jazz—but the xylophone and the vibraharp (an earlier version of the vibraphone we know today) were, nevertheless, more present in the Detroit scene than one might anticipate. An examination of photos from society, novelty and big bands in Detroit demonstrate that the vibraphone, and xylophone especially, were common in larger ensembles and, despite its often decorative role, were a significant source of orchestral colour. Still, there are practical matters to consider when examining Jackson's choice of instrument. Recordings for example reveal that Jackson was capable of pursuing a career as a pianist.[46] However, as Palmer noted, Jackson was concerned about his relatively small hands and especially the limitations of the third and fourth fingers on his right hand. Palmer observed that 'launching a career as a jazz pianist was tough enough in the era of Tatum, Wilson, Cole and the imminent Powell and Peterson even without the extra pressure brought about by physical different and, thereby, technical anxieties'.[47] But there was also a point of pursuing perceived opportunity, as Jackson noted in a 1999 feature by Josef Woodard. Pupils wanted to play popular instruments like the drums, the saxophone and the piano: 'I thought "well, I've got an open field here. I'll get into this and be all by myself." I thought that was pretty smart' he remembered.[48]

At first sight Lionel Hampton and Red Norvo, the two prominent vibists of the era, seem to have had little impact on the young Jackson. When asked about their influence Jackson responded: 'None, truthfully. My only inspiration was the instrument itself. I was

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[45] Cloyzelle Karrelle Jones, 'The History of Sydney D. Miller High School with Particular Exploration Into those Factors which Resulted in the Inordinately High Incidences of Pupil Successes Considering, and Despite, Existing Socio-Economic Factors which Are Perceived as Being Prime Predictors of High Incidences of Pupil Failure (1919-19957)', (Ed. D. diss., Wayne State University, 1970), 150. I have been unable to determine whether Morris Goldenberg, who is cited as the head of the music faculty at Miller High, is also the author of some of the percussion repertoire's most used educational textbooks and the percussionist who later taught at Juilliard School of Music and appears in Duke Ellington's *Jazz Party*.

[46] In his recording *Telefunken Blues* Jackson plays the piano and can be heard play the guitar on *Soul Brothers*, in which Ray Charles plays the alto. He also played the piano in Gillespie's *The Champ* and sung on the records *Meet Milt Jackson* and *Milt Jackson Sings with the Enrico Intra Group*. I discuss Jackson's piano playing in more detail in the next chapter.

[47] Palmer, 'Milt Jackson Reconsidered, Part I', 6. I have also found an interview of Jackson noting he couldn't separate two fingers. See Shipton, *Groovin' High*, 239.

[48] Josef Woodard, 'Milt Jackson: Elegant Vibrations', *Jazz Times* (September 1999): https://jazztimes.com/features/milt-jackson-elegant-vibrations/ (accessed 3 February 2016). It is perhaps worth noting that, as an asthmatic child, it was difficult for Jackson to play a wind instrument. DeMicheal, 'Jackson of the MJQ', 19.

fascinated by the instrument'.[49] When pressed on this matter in another interview he similarly noted: 'I had no eyes to play Hamp's way. I just got hung on the instrument'.[50] Although Norvo and Hamp were among the few vibists a young musician could copy, Jackson noted that Parker and Gillespie were instead major influences. In an interview for *Coda* Jackson returned to the issue and explained that Hampton influenced his decision to make the vibraphone his profession, but not to pick it up in the first place.[51] Hampton played in Detroit at least once in the 1930s, when the Benny Goodman band visited for the first time in 1938. Jackson confirmed that he heard him in 1938 and then again in 1940 with his own band.[52]

Miller High School was a mutable space which reflected Detroit's shifting social character. The school was located at 2322 Dubois in what was commonly known as the Black Bottom (a region where most African Americans who moved to Detroit during the automotive boom from the late 1930s throughout the 1940s and until the early 1960s settled), and underwent dramatic changes before World War II.[53] When Miller High first opened, the student body comprised pupils of mixed backgrounds that included a significant number of black and southern European students. Ashburn L. Norfleet, a black worker with over forty years' contact with Miller High and its community, recalled that 'you [a black man] found yourself surrounded by people from different ethnic extractions. The languages sound intriguing, and the people all seemed hard-working and closely knit as a family'.[54] He recalled a harmonious coexistence between the diverse attenders and staff alike. Similarly, Ferdinand Galante, a former pupil, described the school's community as an ethnic melting pot.[55] By 1923, the year of Jackson's birth, the population at Miller High included 1700 pupils, and the grounds expanded significantly to include impressive facilities, such as a shop, drawing rooms, a cooking room and two science laboratories. A few years later, in 1932 Miller was elevated to senior high status to accommodate the huge influx of African American students.

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[49] Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 301. Jackson notes the same in an earlier interview with Rick Mattingly. Mattingly, '1996 PAS Hall of Fame', 15. Hampton played in Detroit at least once in the 1930s, when the Benny Goodman band visited for the first time in 1938. Jackson confirmed to have heard him in 1938 and then again in 1940 with his own band. DeMicheal, 'Jackson of the MJQ', 19.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Danson, 'Milt Jackson', 4.

[52] DeMicheal, 'Jackson of the MJQ', 19.

[53] Jones, 'The History of Sydney D. Miller High School', 4.

[54] Ibid., 29.

[55] Ibid., 101.

The arrival of African American pupils resulted in the appointment of the first black teacher in 1934, Lloyd Cofer, who was educated at Tufts, Columbia and Harvard Universities. The employment of other black teachers soon followed.[56] Cofer recalled that the children at the school 'got along beautifully', and attributed the peaceful interaction of the school's diverse population to its shared financial situation: 'everybody at Miller was on the same socio-economic level'. Although romanticised descriptions may not reveal the real place of segregated life in Detroit, we see in Cofer's testimony how interracial friendships, professional collaborations and relationships in the communities publicly flouted the dominant values by violating racial taboos. Cloyzelle Jones noted that many of the school's pupils came from families with very little or no income, surviving on welfare support. Yusef Lateef, for example, remembered that in stage shows they used to give away white potatoes to the poor people who attended theatre. According to Lateef, his family used to survive on them, eating them at every meal.[57] Jones, who reports to have experienced at first hand police brutality against the black population, noted that prostitution was a sustainable source of income for black high school girls, whilst drugs, after-hours houses and numbers operations were abundant in the community that Miller High served.[58] Despite an alleged brutal police force, discrimination on all fronts and the lack of opportunities for education and career choices, several Miller High graduates excelled in (among other subjects) music, education and law.

Following changes from a principally Jewish population, to students of German, Italian, Greek and Caucasian origin, by 1940 over seventy per cent of the school population was black. Slobin argued that European immigrants, African Americans from the South, and white southerners who streamed into the city, particularly during the war years, were very diverse but musically they looked cohesive.[59] The arrival of African American students and staff alike inevitably resulted in changes in the school's curriculum. Its renowned athletic programme, for example, received a boost and the curriculum eventually included a boxing programme which, according to Jones, was tied to Brewster Centre (a sports centre where

[56] Ibid.

[57] Lateef, *The Gentle Giant*, 12. Similarly, another member of the Miller cohort, saxophonist Pepper Adams was born in a family desperately poor in 1930, even though his parents had degrees from the University of Michigan.

[58] 'Numbers operations' were a form of illegal gambling. A 1941 trial exposed the degree to which illegal gambling places operated in Detroit. Jones, 'The History of Sydney D. Miller High School', 6.

[59] Slobin, 'Improvising a Musical Metropolis', 2.

Sugar Ray Robinson and Miles Davis famously learned to box).[60] The school developed a reputation for not only attracting highly skilled teachers.[61] When Vivian Dolman, a music teacher, joined Miller High, the music curriculum already included an advanced harmony class.[62] At Miller, Dolman found students that were poor but full of enthusiasm, with 'a pride in themselves that I marvel at even today'.[63] Dolman described an egalitarian school community where non-music staff contributed meaningfully to the music life at the school She recalled the help of Oscar Hand, a janitor trained as a baritone singer who would assist students with warming up exercises. Dolman also named Vance Kinnard, an African American English teacher and a classically trained pianist who helped her by accompanying her ensembles.[64] For Slobin, music in high school demonstrated both the stability and the turbulence of the rapidly changing city.

In interviewing Dolman, Jones pointed at the orchestras and chamber music groups that the school yearbooks testified to, with the music teacher reporting that by the time of her arrival at Miller High there was a lack of equipment to work with. Having interviewed former students, Jones reported that the Board of Education had removed classical instruments, sending them to other schools whose students' background lend themselves better to 'cultured', 'classical' music.[65] Jackson confirmed this in an interview with Jones:

> In the 1940 era when I was last at Miller the program had begun to drift somewhat from being classics oriented to a basic program of the orchestra, marching band and dance band. The String ensemble for which Miller was famous was disbanded after 1940.[66]

Slobin, whose father taught American history at Miller High, noted that this scenario reveals the superculture at work, 'redirecting resources directly in synch with the general pattern of white dominance and policing, even in a city known specifically for high-school

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[60] Jones, 'The History of Sydney D. Miller High School', 35. As a student at Miller High, Lateef also trained in boxing at Brewster, with a member of staff known to be a sparring partner for, or trained leading sports figures in the African American community that included Joe Louis and Joe Frazier. Lateef, *The Gentle Giant*, 13

[61] Jones, 'The History of Sydney D. Miller High School', 29.

[62] Miller High School Publication of Class Changes, Detroit Board of Education, Microfilm Catalogues, 1933. Cited in Jones, 'The History of Sydney D. Miller High School', 31.

[63] Ibid., 116.

[64] Ibid., 112-15.

[65] It is worth noting that Lucky Thompson and much later Ron Carter attended one of those schools, Cass Tech, although Thompson never graduated. Ibid., 116.

[66] Ibid., 149.

orchestras'.[67] Although high school music held special standing as 'a microcosm for American ideals of social cohesion,' Slobin's research exposed a series of conscious efforts to erase subcultural traditions.

Although the purpose of instrumental study in the schools was 'principally cultural and social, and only incidentally and remotely vocational', a talented group of students with the help of the dedicated staff at Miller High seemed to have quite different results.[68] Dolman explained that 'Students were eager to learn. They identified with it [music], and I think regarded it as a way of earning a living.' A longer extract from her interview with Jones is instructive:

> Music classes were business classes for our kids. They'd learn as much as they could about the finer points of musicianship. They practiced long and hard to develop their skills, and that's why Kenneth Burrell and William Evans, Milton Jackson and several others are recognized as being the best at their instruments.[69]

Slobin notes that for those generational foundations music proved to be a sensibility about 'cultural capital as an intrinsic value'.[70] They were assisted by the help of the teaching staff at Miller High who build a model for success in establishment music.

Jackson's musical talents made it difficult for him to finish school. He confessed: 'I wasn't a very good student. Once I found that I liked music, that's all I wanted to study […] I dropped out of school in the tenth grade.'[71] Despite quitting school he seemed appreciative of his education at Miller. He recalled:

> Alvin Loving was my English teacher, and I couldn't pass his class. He told me once that musicians had to be able to speak and read as well as play their instruments. He was a great man in spite of the fact that I couldn't pass his class.[72]

Jones also quotes Jackson as saying: 'That school was fantastic. I was, however, going in a different direction in life and would not listen to my teachers. The staff was solid and warm and I think if I hadn't dropped out, I'd have gotten a music scholarship or something. Miller was ready, I just wasn't at the time'.[73] Jackson's briefly attended Michigan State University

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[67] Slobin, 'Improvising a Musical Metropolis', 7.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Jones, 'The History of Sydney D. Miller High School', 117.

[70] Ibid., 6,10.

[71] Ibid., 150.

[72] Ibid., 75.

[73] Ibid, 151.

sometime between 1940 and 1941but he remembered that this was only to play for their jazz ensemble.[74] Jackson proudly noted that he also had a black history teacher in Miller High:

> To have a black history teacher in 1938 was amazing. So I've been a rebel all my life. I never agreed with what the system dictated. Most musicians don't have to get involved in politics to make a living playing music, but you have to learn about the political structure in order to learn what's happening in the world.[75]

Jackson never ignored the hardships of Detroit and those issues of historical interest that gave rise to the shape and tone of his era. His persona reflected powerful connections to African American communal values; the vibist gradually became more outspoken, especially when it came to race relations and the music industry. Like other African American artists of the time, he found it important to relate to the struggles of his people so that future generations could identify with it, forging a sense of collective identity, and a historical memory that emanated from written, oral and visual sources. In line with my introductory statement to allow Jackson's opinions to come out in this thesis, I find important to include a larger section of a 1999 interview during which the vibist criticised the music industry. Jackson's use of Afro-urban argot, as well as the content of his interview, centres his rhetoric within the up-to-date field of contemporaneous African American rhetoric:

> Who knows better how to write this article than you? You know what I mean? You're getting the information from me over the phone, and then you're going to sit around and have somebody else write it? You know what I'm saying? That's pretty stupid, right? You're the one getting first hand information, therefore why not you be the one to write it?
>
> The same thing applies to the music we play. They think that we're too dumb to do anything except play the music. This has been a psychological belief with a lot of people, man, and I'm serious. I'm talking about experience. I'm not talking about any hearsay. I'm backing this with 50 years of my own personal experiences […]
>
> See jazz music is not bigger, man. I'll tell you two things. You're not going to like this what I'm going to tell you because it's a racial thing. It's black music, actually, the creation of it. The respect of that music would give us control enough to be independent and you know that in this country you can't have that. The government's got to be able to control everything.
>
> Even as big as rock and roll music and disco music is today, they control it. Right? O.K. Because man I always reiterate in a way not to put people down, because that's

[74] Lazaro Vega, 'Remembering Milt Jackson', *All About Jazz* (1999): https://www.allaboutjazz.com/remembering-milt-jackson-milt-jackson-by-lazaro-vega.php (accessed 1 July 2017).

[75] Mattingly, '1996 PAS Hall of Fame', 16.

> not my place to put people down—each artist has an obligation in terms of professional respect to other artists, o.k? But man don't tell me that Elton John or Kenny Rogers or Elvis Presley, all those people make all that money because they play more creative music than we do. That's not true […]
>
> But no man, these little things I point out in my classroom when I do teach, you know, because I do think it's important that people understand where we're coming from and what it's about, because people don't really understand our music and don't really know what it's about.
>
> I'll give you the best clue of all. Of all the jazz concerts, man, we've never had a race riot at a jazz concert. Not yet. And then with the Woodstock, right, went to Max Yasgur's farm and tore it up; And that other place (Note: Altamont Raceway Park), right? I mean tore it up.
>
> We've never had that. I think the government should look into that. There's a reason for that. That music is therapeutic, it's healing, it's soothing, it brings people together, it don't tear people apart. I bet you wouldn't be reading about people killing a 15 year old kid and that kind of stuff on the front page of the paper if we had more of this music to bring to the people. I bet you that.
>
> The people in Japan love jazz music, man, and also in Europe, far more than they ever did here. And that always puzzled me until I went over there to really get into it for myself and find out what it is. It's their tradition and culture, man. We've gotten away from that in America. We live in a country of complete fantasy.[76]

To explore some of the meanings that these code-fusions may have generated, I will attempt to situate this text more firmly in its historical moment. Throughout the twentieth century, race riots clustered around period of crisis and, in the face of emerging ghettos shifted from interracial clashes to outbursts.[77] 'Detroit was a pressure cooker with the heat turn on too high', Slobin observed.[78] It exploded amid wartime in the deadly race riot of 1943, when Jackson was twenty years old. The riot resulted in hundreds of injuries and claimed thirty-four lives, most of which among the black population. Property worth over $2 millions (1943 currency, over $30 million at the time of writing) was destroyed, again most in the black neighbourhood, Paradise Valley, and over one million war production hours

[76] Vega, 'Remembering Milt Jackson', All About Jazz (1999): https://www.allaboutjazz.com/remembering-milt-jackson-milt-jackson-by-lazaro-vega.php (accessed 1 July 2017).

[77] Dominic J. Capeci Jr. and Martha Wilkeron, 'The Detroit Rioters of 1943: A Reinterpretation', *Michigan Historical Review* 16, no. 1 (1990), 49.

[78] Slobin, 'Improvising a Musical Metropolis', 3.

lost.[79] It followed the February 1942 race riots at the Sojourner Truth Homes, a federal housing project build for African Americans in Detroit.[80]

Figure 3-1 Sign posted in response to proposed Sojourner Truth Housing project, February 1942 (Public Domain)



These incidents were largely the result of the severe housing crisis and discriminatory real estate practices, a lack of minority representation in the police forces and the fierce competition for jobs and space. Combined with the white-organised hate crimes against black defence workers, the post-war political battles over racially integrated low-income public housing and freedom of movement in all-white residential neighbourhoods all added to the bitter backdrop for citizens of Jackson's generation. In a country menaced by Jim Crow laws where the black population experienced severe racial injustices, there is little doubt that Jackson's personal experience of the tensions and locomotive cultural energies of the

[79] Capeci Jr. and Wilkeron, 'The Detroit Rioters of 1943', 53.

[80] White (Polish according to Capeci and Wilkerton) neighbours opposed the U.S. federal housing project and attempted to stop black citizens of moving in. Ibid., 52.

changing demographics of the city led him to view his milieu in dynamic terms, especially when it came to racial relations. As such, it is important to convey his worldviews from the specific historical moment; his efforts need be considered within the historical entanglement between white supremacy and listening in the United States, contextualising the events that unfolded within the ongoing struggle of African Americans to decolonise their listening practice, exert their freedom to sound in safety, diversity and solidarity, shifting how they were heard in everyday life and in spaces allegedly public.

3.4 Scenes and the City: Improvising a Musical Metropolis

There were places and moments in North America where unique circumstances created the ideal environment for developments in music. One such place was Detroit for the larger part of the twentieth century. In this section I want to focus on the jazz cityscape offered by Detroit from the 1920s until Jackson's departure to New York in 1943. My circumscribed focus develops on larger temporal and topical horizons as I bring forth the kind of complexities of a music scene in motion, which I examine as a space of social morphology, and establish connections between popular experience and broader historical processes. My take on examining Jackson's recordings in later chapters, as a prism for examining the totality of the influences beyond the studio, requires a detailed account of the continuous development that occurred throughout this period. If anything, such a stance allows us to catch a glimpse of daily life of the young vibist, as it contain materials that are usually excluded from the canonical collections offered by his discography. After a brief historical excursus, therefore, I want to take readers on a circuitous, flâneur-like tour through the city's scene, from the prestigious Melody Club to the smaller scale and sometimes improvised performance spaces, to imagine a music scene as the one witnessed by a young Milt Jackson.[81] I might recall in this connection that seminal thinker Michel de Certeau, and his celebrated writings about the city, especially his proposal about the tour as a mode of urban understanding; between the map's totalising static view and (as here), the tour as a mode of organisation that gives shape to movements within a constructed place.[82]

Black neighbourhoods in urban centres such as Detroit began a steady decline during the Depression, which continued throughout the latter half of the century. Detroit, however,

[81] 'Scene' is a term first used in journalism in the 1940s to describe the marginal and bohemian ways of life of jazz musicians. Scenes come to define both specific geographical locations as well as the imagined, designed spaces within which musicians operate. One example of a designed space is the jazz scene forged by recordings.

[82] Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984).

continued to attract thousands of black Southerners: the years surrounding World War II saw an accelerated flow of African American workers which fortified the city's migrational character. Much has been written about the economic and political reasons African Americans abandoned the South for the Motor City. Clearly, job opportunities, racial oppression and the promise for a financial uplift influenced many. Indeed, the arrival of African American residents and the changing demographics of the city went hand-in-hand with the industrialisation of Detroit. This was largely the result Henry Ford's and his rivals' success in creating a mass market for the automobile industry, which signalled the accelerated arrival of a huge proletarian work force that defined Detroit during the twentieth century.[83] This also signalled an aggressively new economic clout for African Americans, particularly for those who lived in the urban North. But despite the sundry motivations that caused migrants to swarm to Detroit and other urban destinations, there were many more reasons that accounted for this demographic shift. One of them is represented in the idea of politically charged blackness in contemporaneous America: a notion grounded in the migration and indissolubly linked to developments in post-1950s American society. This radicalised black identity found expression in, among other things, music. Many new cultural and social formations flourished as a direct consequence of the mass movement.

Distinguished for its industrialisation as well as its later contribution towards the war effort, Detroit also boasted a music scene impressive in both its numbers and pedigree. The 'Arsenal of Democracy' (named for its essential war industry production work), and 'the capital of the twentieth century' changed at a fast pace that defined modern industrial life whilst having a profound impact on the musical panorama in North America. Suzanne Smith has demonstrated that the signature Motown sounds were tied to the automobile industry, with the rhythms of the factory floor inspiring the beats of 'Hitsville, U.S.A' and to the larger history of sacred and secular music.[84] Though not the sole influence on this shift, the role of jazz in moderating such developments inspired new trends towards global artistic awareness among small, yet powerful, groups in Detroit. Although it is broadly understood that local musicians played a major role in the development of big band music, jazz of the 1940s (as for example with the distinguished Detroit piano school) and later with Motown, it is necessary to highlight the extent to which these developments were fostered by the plethora of acts one

[83] See Federico Bucci, *Albert Kahn: Architect of Ford* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 47. Slobin, 'Improvising a Musical Metropolis', 2.

[84] Suzanne E Smith, *Dancing in the Street: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999).

encountered in the city during the first two decades of the twentieth century. In fact, we might easily see the panorama of musical life and entertainment changing as rapidly as it did in other urban centres in the United States: New Orleans, Chicago and New York. Before the 1920s, one would witness variations of blues bands, novelty orchestras, cornet bands, minstrel and vaudeville shows, and European classics performed by white and black society bands. The latter combined the 'legitimate' musical practices of classical music with popular dance and song, and with the dance craze of foxtrots and tangos during the second decade of the century, paved the way for the conventions of social dance in the 1930s.[85]

Detroit became recognised as an important centre of musical activity, as a site of black cultural production, and as a home to a thriving network of churches, theatres, lounges, nightclubs and dance halls. Jackson remembered that many musicians from smaller cities around Detroit had to migrate to the city to find work, and listed Sonny Stitt as one of them.[86] The community of black musicians in Detroit included a number of well-schooled musicians, predating the examples of leading jazz figures in the 1940s. A popular society band, for instance, was led by Leroy Smith, a violinist who was trained by some of the best private teachers in Detroit, according to a 1939 interview with the bandleader, and whose father was a cornetist, sketching in this way a musical tradition that dates to mid-nineteenth-century North America.[87] After his move to New York, Smith's musical abilities secured him a residence for a long engagement at the fashionable Connie's Inn. Another violinist, Ben Shook, had been educated at Fisk University. According to one account, the bands of Theodore Finney, Fred Stone and Benjamin Shook 'monopolised the city's entertainment and social world […] up into the 1920s'.[88] In their survey of jazz music in Detroit, Lars Björn and Jim Gallert report many other acts, including Bob Cruzet's Alabamians (a group that consisted of skilled young players that 'bent notes more frequently'), locating Detroit among centres of innovation and change.[89]

Several accounts reveal that the Detroit community bristled with energy. As the jazz age took hold and the 'Roaring Twenties' unfolded, Detroit became the home of several

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[85] Detroit not only imported popular music but was also home to composers. When W. C. Handy visited the city in the 1890s, he was reportedly impressed by two ragtime compositions by Fred Stone, 'My Ragtime Baby' and 'Silks and Rags'. Björn and Gallert, *Before Motown*, 14.

[86] Arthur Dawkins, 'Howard University Jazz Oral History Project: Milt Jackson', (15-17 December 1984): http://library.howard.edu/Jazz/miltjackson (accessed 11 December 2017).

[87] *Detroit Tribune*, February 11, 1939. Cited in Björn and Gallert, *Before Motown*, 16.

[88] Lars Björn, 'Black Men in a White World: The Development of the Black Jazz Community in Detroit, 1917-1940', *Detroit In Perspective* (1980), 2.

[89] Björn and Gallert, *Before Motown*, 15.

popular groups, as musicians and ensembles from elsewhere frequently visited the city to play, profoundly influencing local musicians and audiences alike, forging a music scene sensitive to intrablack cultural dynamics. By responding to the diversity of musical tastes among the black communities created by geographic segregation caused in part by migration, musicians developed elements of musical style that could reflect such changes. I want to pause for a moment to describe the activity of William McKinney's Cotton Pickers and Jean Goldkette's Orchestra, whose importance is often celebrated in the canonical study of jazz. McKinney's group paved the way for the development of several distinguished musicians, a familiar trope that one encounters in subsequent years in big bands. Largely known as the best group in its category in the Midwest, the group managed to sign arranger Don Redman from the Fletcher Henderson band. Redman's reputation had grown significantly after his collaboration in New York with Henderson, whose group included the young Louis Armstrong and Coleman Hawkins.

Having been formed in Springfield Ohio by drummer McKinney and saxophonist Milton Senior as the Synco Jazz Band, the band moved to Detroit in 1927 at the invitation of bandleader, impresario and ballroom owner Jean Goldkette, for a long-term residency at the famous Graystone Ballroom. Goldkette is also credited with arranging a recording contract for the band with RCA Victor.[90] McKinney hardly featured among the band's musical achievements and soon took over as the group's manager, leaving his drum chair to Cuba Austin, a tap dancer and drummer who soon became one of the band's main attractions, along with trumpeter John Nesbitt.[91] Other band members at one time included pianists James P. Johnson and Fats Waller, trumpeters Doc Cheatham and Rex Stewart, as well as Benny Carter and Coleman Hawkins on reeds. Legend has it that Redman trained the group's members behind the stage to improve their reading skills. In some ways, we may see in this connection how various society and territory bands began, under the influence of travelling musicians and the dissemination of the first jazz records, to change and incorporate the popular styles one would encounter in more established centres.

Goldkette's story, on the other hand, demonstrates the degree of movement that characterised the population of North America and Detroit at the time. Born in France, he was raised in Greece where he apparently began his training as a classical pianist, and then

[90] Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930s-1945* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 302.

[91] Ibid., 301-17.

moved to Russia to study at the Moscow Conservatory.[92] Goldkette is portrayed as an ambitious young man who believed in the development of jazz as a true form of American music. He became known as 'the Paul Whiteman of the West' (therefore, as the King of Jazz of the West, one may note).[93] The musicians in the band, which included at various times saxophonist Frankie Trumbauer, trumpeter Bix Beiderbecke, and the Dorsey brothers, were so skilled that the group famously won 'a battle of the bands' competing with the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra. In his recollection of the event, trumpeter Rex Stewart, who was in Henderson's band at the time, remembered that 'everything this band played prompted for encores from the crowd'.[94] Stewart, who rated the Goldkette orchestra above Benny Goodman's band and other acts of similar status, was humbled to note that they 'learned that Jean Goldkette's orchestra was […] the greatest in the world, and the first original white swing band in jazz history'.[95] Several central figures in the Detroit scene received major experience with ensembles such as the Cotton Pickers and Goldkette's orchestra.

Talent and opportunity transformed the city into a woodshed for developing jazz players. Amid the depths of the Great Depression— 'when the nation catches a cold, Detroit gets pneumonia', was (and still is) a popular saying—a vibrant music scene took hold in the city. Seized by the fever of swing music, the major ballrooms were rivalled by nightspots in the African American community, namely Paradise Valley, where an unusual degree of interracial mixing developed. Due to segregation, African Americans could own businesses in this district only. When the bands of Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Bennie Moten and Count Basie toured nearby cities where no hotels were available to black musicians, they would drive musicians to Paradise Valley for accommodation. Packed with black-owned shops, bars, gambling houses, nightclubs, groceries and hotels, as well as doctors' and law offices among other services, Paradise Valley became the heart of the African American commercial and entertainment centre. Björn and Gallert report an increase in jazz venues from seven in the 1920s, to over twenty in the 1930s, many of which were owned or managed by African Americans. One notable example was McKinney, who ran a prominent black and tan nightclub in the Valley, the Melody Club, as well as the Cozey Corner. Other places of entertainment owned by African Americans were the Chocolate Bar and the M.D.L club,

[92] Rex Stewart, *Jazz Masters of the Thirties* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 12. Björn and Gallert, *Before Motown*, 28.

[93] Ibid., 29.

[94] Stewart, *Jazz Masters of the Thirties*, 11.

[95] Ibid.

which both had regular house bands with members having served in other prominent bands. Some of these establishments saw Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington, Earl Hines, Teddy Wilson, and Cab Calloway perform. Visiting artists would mingle with locals and musicians, managers and patrons were quick to engage in a reciprocal exchange of ideas; this type of trafficking of musical meaning was unknown to the city before.

In 1939, on Monday nights, there would be a big band at the Graystone Ballroom and Gardens, 4235 Woodward Avenue near Canfield.[96] 'It was a fabulous showplace where McKinney's Cotton Pickers, with lively arrangements by Don Redman, were popular with dancers, that is, white dancers, since like most of the ballrooms and theatres, the Graystone at this time was segregated, except on certain nights'.[97] Redman had in fact returned to New York in 1931 to form his own band, and at this stage I am unable to determine whether Lateef refers to his arrangements or whether Redman revisited Detroit for performances. Björn reports that only on Monday nights were African Americans allowed into the Ballroom, which confirms why Lateef refers to Monday nights performances.[98] Other ballrooms included the Arcadia and the Palais de Danse; the latter listed by Björn as the only hall available for 'coloured dances', albeit only between midnight and 6 a.m. on holidays. Earlier establishments included the Koplin Theater, known as the only black Vaudeville theatre with an orchestra, which Lateef recalls attending, and the Vaudette in close proximity.[99]

The Howard Bunts band, another major black ensemble in Detroit, also spent much of the 1930s at the Graystone. Former member Junior Warren recalled that on Monday nights the band would participate in battles with bands led by, among others, Fletcher Henderson and Duke Ellington, who in the 1930s were touring the country.[100] By that time, however, a significant shift was taking place in the Detroit scene as several cabarets started opening around Paradise Valley. Reports suggest that because shows changed on a weekly basis musicians had to be skilled readers and able to perform in a variety of musical idioms.[101] After-hours venues cared for the musicians' more adventurous musical experiments. Roy Lighfoot is listed as the owner of one of the first after-hours venues that hosted jam sessions, located in the basement of the Biltmore Hotel. He later opened the B & C club, situated

[96] Lateef, *The Gentle Giant*, 19.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Björn, 'Black Men in a White World', 4.
[99] Ibid., 8. Lateef, *The Gentle Giant*, 9.
[100] Björn, 'Black Men in a White World', 9.
[101] Ibid., 10.

across the street from another after-hours venue, the Rhythm Club, while the Band Box and the Russell House were the two most popular meeting place for musicians in the 1930s.[102] When touring groups finished their engagements at ballrooms, musicians (who would typically be spending the night in the area's black-owned hotels) would congregate with local players in those after-hours venues.[103] Jam sessions at the Blue Bird Inn, for example, were scheduled for every Thursday night.[104]

The Blue Bird Inn was often remembered as a place of special significance in the brewing of the young modernist Detroiters, as the centre of the city's jazz activity and a premiere stop for the touring bebop musicians.[105] A black-owned working-class bar in the heart of the West Side black community, the house band would play 'Modern Jazz' six evenings a week. Pianist Tommy Flanagan remembered: 'I never saw a place like it even in New York. It had a neighbourhood atmosphere and all the support the Jazz club needed. Everyone who loved jazz in Detroit came.[106] Pianist Barry Harris and saxophonist Pepper Adams also made similar observations about the venue. The clientele included working class people just getting off or stopping on the way to a factory late shift. These circumstances are testimony to the music's urban origins, paving the way to the later developments of Motown musicians who honed their talents on the streets and through the institutions of an industrial city. The musical culture of 1930s and 1940s Detroit quickly followed the changes that were sweeping the country, and the development of a musicians' subculture in those after-hours spots and improvised performance spaces laid the institutional foundation for the cultivation of the new jazz of the time. The city's growing economy as the United States entered the Second World War was a further factor in the increased demand for entertainment that occupied the city's existing nightlife.[107]

'Musical experience was so compressed in the scant three generations from 1910-1970,' Mark Slobin notes, 'that Detroit was a byword for power, not ruin, and for a manic

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[102] Ibid., 12.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid., 13.

[105] Macías, 'Detroit Was Heavy', 49.

[106] Ibid.

[107] With the coming of the Second World War Detroit was still recovering from the depression that hit the city the previous decade and the city's economy had just begun to flourish. This economic boom, together with the draft that deprived factories of workers, instigated recruitment campaigns that brought about 500,000 migrants from the South in the first three years of the decade alone. Although the overall population in Detroit grew by a mere 14% in the decade, the African-American population doubled. Slobin, 'Improvising a Musical Metropolis', 2; Bjorn and Gallert, *Before Motown*, 61-4.

musical momentum that was widely influential'.[108] In this respect, it is important to acknowledge musicians in Detroit who were performing in several other idioms. One notable example is the celebrated blues artist John Lee Hooker. Although biographical accounts often differ, it is certain that Hooker moved to Detroit in 1943 to work as a janitor for the Ford Motor Company. The *Rolling Stone* suggests that Hooker's career took off in Detroit in the late 1930s, noting that performance venues were so noisy that his only recourse was to strum his open tuned guitar with such ferocity as to put an indelible stamp on rock & roll.[109] Regardless of Hooker's exact date of arrival, the legendary guitarist entertained Detroiters after his day job, playing at home parties and bars around the city.

These musicians created a nucleus that laid the foundation for new musical developments that would shape cultural production in the United States and the world in the next half century. Detroit became a mythic site of cultural memory and cultural production that embodied the city's social energy with musical styles coexisting in an improvised, complicated and rich dialectic. In this respect, the Detroit cohort played an important role in the maintenance, creation, circulation and reception of African American expressive culture.[110] Within the context of this burgeoning musical momentum, Jackson developed as a young musician, in a stimulating environment and as part of a modernist circle of young maverick musicians. He recognised Detroit's position as an important site of black cultural production since the 1920s, and as home to a thriving network of churches, theatres, lounges, nightclubs, and dance halls, as well as the more intimate performance spaces: the school's band rehearsal space, the living rooms and after-hours sessions. There is some sense of romance in Jackson's account of the music scene in Detroit, as evidenced in a 1984 interview with *Cadence*:

> It was a beautiful environment then. I wish they could have kept that environment and enhanced it. The environment of the 40s in Detroit was very similar to the

[108] Slobin, 'Improvising a Musical Metropolis', 20.

[109] John Milward, 'John Lee Hooker: Mr. Lucky', *Rolling Stone* (3 October 1991): http://www.rollingstone.com/music/albumreviews/mr-lucky-19911003 (accessed 25 October 2017). Also see 'John Lee Hooker Biography', *John Lee Hooker: The Official Website*: http://www.johnleehooker.com/history/biography (accessed 30 June 2017); 'John Lee Hooker Bio', *Rolling Stone*, Available Online: http://www.rollingstone.com/music/artists/john-lee-hooker/biography (accessed 30 June 2017).

[110] See Macías, 'Detroit Was Heavy', 55.

> environment of 52nd Street when I first came to New York. We had Al McKibbon, Howard McGhee, Teddy Edwards […], the Jones brothers.[111]

On another occasion, in a similar spirit, he included figures such as Barry Harris, Tommy Flanagan, Kenny Burrell and Curtis Fuller.[112] Flanagan also recalled the Detroit cohort:

> There were older guys in Detroit like Milt Jackson and Hank Jones and Lucky Thompson, who left early and came back to play gigs, and there were local guys like Willie Anderson, who never left … And there was a whole bunch of us—some younger, some older—who didn't get away so fast: Ronald Hanna, who went to school with me; Paul Chambers; Doug Watkins, Donald Byrd, Kenny Burrell (he loved Oscar Moore, and we put together a Nat Cole-type trio); Sonny Red Kyner; Barry Harris […]
>
> We gave weekly concerts at a musicians collective– the World Stage Theatre. We worked at clubs like the Blue Bird […] we played in the Rouge Lounge, and at El Sino, where Charlie Parker worked. As teen-agers, we'd stand outside the screen door by the bandstand, looking in at Bird. All this lasted into the mid-fifties. Then people began to leave.[113]

These nostalgic comments, by both Jackson and Flanagan, anchored the music to its urban origins. Aside from the 'playground' of admirable musical quality encountered at Miller High, the city of Detroit produced many more highly respected jazz musicians, such as saxophonist Wardell Gray, trumpeter Willie Wells and pianist Alma Smith. Smith—who was also known for playing the vibraphone, offering perhaps a degree of competition to Jackson—together with Anderson are often appreciated as predating the keyboard tradition for which Detroit became known; the lineage of pianists includes Hank Jones, Barry Harris, Tommy Flanagan and Roland Hanna, with Anderson being especially celebrated.[114] John Hammond, known for boosting the careers of such musicians as Charlie Christian and Billie Holiday, was stationed at Camp Plauche, Louisiana, together with Anderson. The pianist played in the Coloured Post band at the time of his military service, impressing Hammond,

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[111] Robert D Rusch, 'Milt Jackson', in *Jazztalk: The Cadence Interviews* (Secausus, New Jersey: Lyle Tuart Inc., 1984), 45.

[112] Danson, 'Milt Jackson', 4. Ibid.

[113] Tommy Flanagan interview by Whitney Balliett. Quoted in David H. Rosenthal, *Hard Bop: Jazz and Black Music, 1955-1965* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 94-95.

[114] Lateef remembered that Anderson played in the style of Erroll Garner whilst local disc jockey Bill Randle described him as the best piano player in Detroit. Similarly, Kenny Burrell described Anderson as 'phenomenal'. Lateef, *The Gentle Giant*, 18; Lars Björn, 'The Homie', *Detroit MetroTimes* (23 June 2004): http://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/the-homie/Content?mode=print&oid=2179021 (accessed 14 June 2017), 3.

who nominated him for the 'All-American Jazz Band' in *Esquire*'s 1945 Board of Experts poll.[115]

A talented group of students at Miller regularly dropped by the Anderson home, not far from where Lateef resided, where they felt at ease, addressing Anderson's mother as 'Mama A', and enjoying her cooking whilst playing music incessantly.[116] 'We went to sleep with music and we woke up with music' Anderson's sister, Ether Thomas remembered. 'Milt Jackson used to come over because he loved navy beans. Yusef Lateef liked hamburgers. Everything we had, we shared'.[117] We witness in such formulation the value of performing music in informal settings across Detroit, where African American music, secular or sacred, articulated an alternative worldview and provided a wellspring of innovative ideas. Young Detroit musicians were active in the Church community as evident in Lateef's recollection of childhood life in Detroit:

> Black Bottom back then had Pentecost "Holy Roller" churches in practically every neighbourhood. I think a lot of people were attracted to the churches because of the music and dancing. The vibraphonist Milt Jackson was a member of such a congregation. On several occasions when I attended these "Holly Roller" churches they would ask me to play my saxophone for the penny collection. I performed a song called "Sweet Hour of Prayer" with the pianist.[118]

'We was in church all the time, Beaulah Baptist', Anderson's sister, Gwen Johnson, recalled. 'And I would sing and Willie would play'.[119] Anderson, who hadn't formally joined the church, is said not to have been baptised and avoided doing so because he was playing music in bars. After an incident with a minister who questioned Anderson's appropriateness for playing in congregation, Anderson is said to have moved away from church.[120] His story is one repeated several times in African American cultural history. In such testimonies we see that, although the blues existed in many stylistic idioms, it also generated certain tensions in

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[115] Björn, 'The Homie', Detroit MetroTimes (23 June 2004): http://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/the-homie/Content?mode=print&oid=2179021 (accessed 14 June 2017).

[116] Lateef, *The Gentle Giant*, 18. Vega, 'Remembering Milt Jackson', All About Jazz (1999): https://www.allaboutjazz.com/remembering-milt-jackson-milt-jackson-by-lazaro-vega.php (accessed 1 July 2017).

[117] Björn, 'The Homie', Detroit MetroTimes (23 June 2004): http://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/the-homie/Content?mode=print&oid=2179021 (accessed 14 June 2017).

[118] Lateef, *The Gentle Giant*, 11.

[119] Björn, 'The Homie', Detroit MetroTimes (23 June 2004): http://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/the-homie/Content?mode=print&oid=2179021 (accessed 14 June 2017), 2.

[120] Motown artist Joe Hunter worked as an organist in local churches to supplement his income as a musician. When in a similar way some preacher criticised Hunter for 'serving two gods' by playing secular and sacred music, Hunter famously replied 'I'm just serving one God, the one who gave me talent'. Smith, *Dancing in the Street*, 161-62.

religious contexts. Jackson, for example, noted the tension between his performances in bars in Detroit and his congregation saying that nightlife didn't align with the strict discipline that membership in the COGIC required.[121] But musicians were faced with the challenge to balance between the sacred and the profane; they were connected to the church, but were also called on to perform in bars and other places of entertainment, in spaces of confrontation that demanded revision. Like Jackson, Anderson dropped out of Miller High in his senior year.

Although this story is a specific one, it has more general implications. The analysis of the city's scene and its musical past unveils several systems whose interaction is not obvious but which were unfolding in a continuously dynamic moment. The musicians developed their skills from resources unique to their urban environment, honing their talents on the streets and in institutions supported by the industrial Detroit life. Public housing projects, public schools, local churches, jazz and blues clubs, street corners, and military bands all contributed to the development of the Detroit sound. In this respect, I want to draw parallels between Henri Lefebvre's sketches of three places of spatiality, in which the lines between the *designed* (or artificial) space of school, segregation and community management, and the *lived* space of family life are not clearly separable.[122] Music occupied both for Jackson, whether in his house and family life, their Sunday congregations, Miller High's classrooms or his life as consumer and citizen. Throughout the black community, the music in the city's bars and clubs was also represented in informal settings where local musicians furthered their education. In school, houses, the church or the neighbourhood, aspiring musicians engaged in extracurricular sessions with friends and colleagues. Research reveals indispensable educational networks that anchored black Detroit's contemporary musical infrastructure; Barry Harris' teaching is the best known. Harris recounted that 'My house was a classroom. We practiced all we wanted'.[123] Adams called Harris an informed pedagogue, who influenced the playing and living of many younger musicians and whose protégés had a 'tremendous educational advantage'. Similarly, Lateef remembered that he learned more about improvisation from Harris than any other instructor.

Despite the communal sharing and exchange of knowledge, no material with an explicitly didactic function survives from that period. Peers exchanged information colloquially, in a way of mutual teaching that had a kind of pyramid structure: at the top were a few selected individuals distinguished from all others. Other practitioners who engaged in

[121] Dawkins, 'Howard University Jazz Oral History Project', 57.

[122] Eleonore and Elizabeth Lebas Kofman, ed. *Writings on Cities: Henri Lefebvre* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1996).

[123] Macías, 'Detroit Was Heavy', 53.

apprenticeships and performed with more experienced musicians did not receive any formal training either. Younger musicians may have received exercises of real music or witnessed their idols practising such content, but the information was primarily of cultural and artistic value instead of a passage to artistic production. Younger musicians would imitate patterns, schemata, introductions, conclusions and other necessary knowledge, and try to understand, if this was not explicably stated, the mode of musical thought of their seniors. They would then pass this information to their peers. This communal sharing of knowledge also influenced later generations of musicians. Earl Van Dyke remembered that on the corner of Canfield and John R. 'there was a guy down there, Mr Kennedy, who used to sell hot sausages, tamales, outside on the corner […] All the musicians used to stand out there and meet and talk all night about their gigs'.[124] For Van Dyke, these formal exchanges developed into an informal way to teach jazz:

> When I started getting into jazz, musicians at that time in Detroit used to get together socially on weekends and teach each other tunes and exchange ideas. We didn't compete with each other. We called it the 'Detroit way'. Tommy Flanagan, Roland Hanna, were all part of the scene. Barry Harris was the leader of the young guys like myself. He taught me how to play 'Cherokee', which he had learned from another Detroit musician named Hank Jones.[125]

Aside from the place of music in the communities and the *lived* space, it is also critical to distinguish the role of music in the *imagined* space, which in this case is my principal interpretation of Lefebvre's social plane. The imagined space for Detroit musicians existed in geographically remote performance spaces, including the past. The city's musical traditions, as briefly outlined in this chapter, for example, gave the young generation of Detroit musicians a common orientation, linking contemporaneous musical practices with a heritage that rendered them meaningful. Equally, the dissemination of information through first and second person accounts, the cultural exchange with visiting bands and musicians, as well as the induction of the jazz recording into jazz life, formed an imagined musical space that the young generation were eager to inhabit. In turn, the physically distant jazz scene, represented by those touring bands that visited Detroit, transformed material space into something that transcended a simplistic interpretation of it. Music inhabited and energised personal and subcultural life in all lived, designed and imagined spaces as it engaged with

[124] Smith, *Dancing in the Street*, 159.

[125] Ibid., 159-60.

Detroit's musical community in a social polyphony. The imagined space, then, is instrumental in navigating both space and time.

Jackson's experience reflected some of the rapid, intense social and cultural shifts occurring in Detroit and other centres in the U.S. Given his ample talents, he was quick to enter Detroit's music scene. Newspaper reports place him in the King's Aces big band, an ensemble made up of teenagers that worked for teenage dances in ballrooms and at one point included Alma Smith, Lucky Thompson and Willie Anderson. Alvin Jackson remembered that 'in those days they had "Swinging Clubs" for teenagers and just served ice cream, sodas, and we worked all kinds of spots for kids like that'.[126] On another occasion Milt Jackson recalled that he had a steady job playing vibes in a club called the Twelve Horsemen, which earned him 3 a night.[127] Although there are no recordings of Jackson's music before his arrival in New York, one may assume that, like his predecessors, the young Jackson was influenced by the popular swing bands or, perhaps, by the Goodman quartet of which Lionel Hampton was a member. For musicians of his generation training in America swing or bebop were, after all, a necessary rite of passage. 'I guess the music that Milt and I were playing at school was considered Swing style […] but there were a lot of jam sessions, a lot of small groups and places to play,' Frank Rosolino remembered.[128] Jackson remembered other venues as well, including 'The White Rose' where all musicians would gather.[129]

In 1943 Jackson was offered the chance to join the Earl Hines band, but military service prevented him from taking advantage of the opportunity.[130] Upon Jackson's discharge, Randle heard him at the club Three Sixes with saxophonist Ted Buckner, who had recently left the Jimmy Lunceford orchestra.[131] Buckner was reportedly among those bandleaders in the city who were keen on taking youngsters with fresh ideas under their wings.[132] In the same year Jackson formed a quartet inspired by the then-influential Nat King Cole trio as other groups in Detroit are reported to have been, and which included (aside from Jackson) pianist Anderson, bassist Millard Glover, and guitarist Emitt Slay. A local

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[126] Björn and Gallert, *Before Motown*, 83.

[127] Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 301.

[128] Les Tomkins, 'Frank Rosolino Talking', *Crescendo International* (August 1973): https://www.nationaljazzarchive.co.uk/stories?id=190 (accessed 28 November 2016).

[129] McPartland, 'Milt Jackson on Piano Jazz', (1991): http://www.npr.org/2013/01/07/168786059/milt-jackson-on-piano-jazz (accessed 25 August 2017).

[130] The reports on Jackson's army service are at variance. He was certainly discharged in 1944 after serving in the Army Air Corps, although there are conflicting reports on the year of his draft.

[131] Advertisement, *Michigan Chronicle*, September 30 1944; Quoted in Björn & Gallert, *Before Motown*, 84.

[132] Björn & Gallert, Before Motown, 89.

newspaper columnist was, according to reports, responsible for the naming of the group the 'Four Sharps'.[133] Jackson reported that it was Glover who gave him his nickname 'Bags':

> I was running around Detroit catching up on the music that I had missed for the two years I was in the service. So staying up until six or seven in the morning, I had little bags under my eyes. The bass player in the group I had gave me that name and it stuck.[134]

The group played various venues in Detroit, including the Civic Centre, the Cotton Club and the Club B&C. Jackson was asked by Randle to play the first jazz concert held at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA). Considered a 'beacon of culture' since its founding in 1885 and 'a temple of art' since its move to a white marble Beaux-Arts building across from the Italian Renaissance-style Public Library in 1927, the DIA helped the city to create 'an environment of culture and refinement'.[135] The institute's Garden Court displayed muralist Diego Rivera's two socialist-themed 'Detroit Industry' frescos, so it was a logical venue to host jazz events and forums for left-wing authors and political figures.[136] Each of Randle's concerts sold out the museum's 1,150-seat auditorium, but after ten shows featuring Jackson's quartet, the Four Sharps, the vibist reported that 'They threw me out because they said the audience was a little "rowdy"; they left marijuana cigarettes in the john'.[137] Although bebop musicians did not necessarily seek the approval of cultural critics of the mainstream industry, the DIA's politicised cultural calculus offered to some jazz musicians a kind of social legitimacy as the city made tentative efforts to draw them in.[138]

Regarding Jackson's newly established quartet, Randle commented that 'it played an important role in the early Detroit modern jazz scene and was the rhythm section basis, with Art Mardigan added, for many important early jazz concerts'.[139] On one of these occasions,

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[133] Björn, 'The Homie', Detroit MetroTimes (23 June 2004): http://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/the-homie/Content?mode=print&oid=2179021 (accessed 14 June 2017).

[134] Dave Samuels, 'Milt Jackson Interview', *Modern Percussionist* 3/4(1987 Sep), 13. Jackson confirmed the above anecdote in several interviews. Hear also Jackson being interviewed by Binny Lum on NFSA Australia (available online, https://soundcloud.com/nfsaaustralia/milt-jackson-interviewed-by) as well as by Marian McPartland for NPR: McPartland, 'Milt Jackson on Piano Jazz', (1991): http://www.npr.org/2013/01/07/168786059/milt-jackson-on-piano-jazz (accessed 25 August 2017).

[135] 'About the DIA', Detroit Institute of Arts, available online, https://www.dia.org/about, (Accessed 17 June 2017); 'A Brief History of the Detroit Institute of Art, available online at http://www.phillipsoppenheim.com/pdf/DIA-Addendum%20-%20A-Brief-History-of-the-Detroit-Institute-of-Arts.pdf (accessed 17 June 2017); Cheri Y. Gay, *Detroit: Then and Now* (Thunder Bay Press, 2002), 120-23.

[136] Macías, 'Detroit Was Heavy', 55.

[137] Björn and Gallert, *Before Motown*, 84-5 & 136.

[138] Macías, 'Detroit Was Heavy', 55.

[139] Ray Charles and Milt Jackson, *Soul Brothers*, Atlantic 1279, 1958, LP. Liner notes by Bill Randle.

in March 1945, Dizzy Gillespie joined the youngsters for a concert in Detroit. The result had a profound impact on Jackson's career, as Randle pointed out: 'After 15 minutes of running down "Grooving High," "Dizzy Atmosphere" […] Diz was ecstatic particularly about Willie and Bags. It was after this concert that Dizzy took Milt to New York'.[140] Anderson was also asked to join Gillespie, but the pianist didn't follow. So it was that, as an early disciple of bebop, Jackson found himself in a growing collective of musicians charting new sonic and sociocultural territories in American music.

Jackson had in fact already met Gillespie by then, in 1942 specifically, when the trumpeter was playing with Earl Hines, in a band that included Charlie Parker on tenor saxophone.[141] This momentous initiative proved significant because under Gillespie's wing Jackson found himself in the core of the group of musicians who would go on to establish the Modern Jazz Quartet. Due to the challenging arrangements in Gillespie's ensemble, the rhythm section (consisting of Jackson, pianist and arranger John Lewis, drummer Kenny Clark and bassist Ray Brown), was known to perform as a quartet during shows to offer wind and brass instrumentalists a breath. The group also performed outside the context of the big band as the Milt Jackson Quartet (MJQ). Legend has it that in 1951 the Milt Jackson Quartet, now with Percy Heath having replaced Ray Brown, was driving home to New York after performing in some sad and disagreeable outlying club. All four of them were squeezed into Jackson's tired old gilded Cadillac, which they had named the 'golden dragon'.[142] Lewis said he was weary of this kind of life, and of the same old head-solos-head rhythm section format that went with it. He wanted to form a band that would be like a chamber group with four independent contrapuntal lines going simultaneously and be accepted in theatres and concert halls where jazz had never been heard. The Modern Jazz Quartet was named then and there in the golden dragon. Connie Kay was soon to replace Clarke and the quartet performed without further changes as a cooperative until their break in 1974. [143]

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[140] Ibid. In an interview with Charles Fox Jackson gives a slightly varied description of the events, noting that he first met Gillespie with Earl Hines. See Shipton, *Groovin' High*, 153. In an interview with Faddis, Jackson notes that he met Gillespie in the Bizurti bar, a place where he used to socialise along other musicians such as Lateef and Willie Wells. Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 299.

[141] In an interview with Arthur Dawkins for the 'Howard University Jazz Oral History Project', Jackson commented that he heard Gillespie play for the first time in 1939, at the Fox Theatre. Dawkins, 'Howard University Jazz Oral History Project: Milt Jackson', (15-17 December 1984): http://library.howard.edu/Jazz/miltjackson (accessed 11 December 2017).

[142] Mike Zwerin, 'Percy Heath Recalls the Modern Jazz Quartet', (25 November 2003): http://www.culturekiosque.com/jazz/portrait/mjq.html (accessed 11 October).

[143] Drummer Connie Kay later replaced Kenny Clark. See Micheal Bourne, 'Bop Baroque and the Blues', *Downbeat* 59, no. 1 (January 1992), 24-27.

Following their first successful tour in Europe, the quartet received appraise for their work in domestic settings. Performances in places of respectability such as the Carnegie Hall and the television plateau soon followed, as well as more tours around the world. This has been noted by Jackson, who remembered that in 1956 'we left the Blackhawk in San Francisco and went straight to Europe. When we came back to the States, people wanted to know what these four black dudes had done to make so much noise in Europe. After that, the Americans started paying more attention to us'.[144] The MJQ's work in the Continent, particularly, seems to have left Jackson with a lasting impression.[145] At a time of social turmoil and ongoing struggles for social justice, Europe provided a refuge for many African American artists and a place where their music received special attention. These are issues that occupy much of the public discussions concerning the MJQ, and to which I briefly return in my conclusion.

[144] Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 300.

[145] Jackson's collaborator Kenny Clark, for example, was among many who lived and worked in Paris among a community of expatriate jazz musicians. Jackson supported the idea that their music was better accepted in Europe.

4 MOVING INTO THE 'TRADITION': JACKSON'S ACQUISITION OF BEBOP

Jackson's ability to improvise in the predominant jazz style of his time relied on an intimate knowledge of its musical elements, processes and forms. His emergence in the jazz scene of the 1940s alongside Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie required him to learn the musical and social processes that defined (and were defined by) the culture of which he was part. To situate his experience and musical outputs in the matrix of jazz music we are required, therefore, to understand the nature of the shared musical knowledge at the given time. Such a task is not without its difficulties. Although the importance of improvisation in jazz music is unquestionable, the details of improvisatory practice and the precise nature of its knowledge base have not been considered in detail. Existing scholarship has been concerned with the visible remains of musical practices that represent only the tip of the iceberg. Although, for example, in Western art music, analysis of a classical work takes place against a widely-understood background of tonal theory and practice that facilitates understanding of the significance of specific features of a musical work within a larger context, in jazz this knowledge is less firmly established. As a result, scholars often ignore a mode of musical thought which, though perhaps not entirely unrecoverable, was fundamental to the way improvising musicians negotiated the predominant jazz style of the 1940s and 1950s. In this section, I am interested in examining a selection of musical elements that defined jazz improvisation at the time when Jackson moved to New York, and to highlight the shared musical knowledge of the time as it was communicated from performer to fellow performers and listeners in recordings.

4.1 New Kid on the Block: New York (1945–1959)

Jackson's musical skills and seriousness about his craft paved the way for his meteoric rise in the New York jazz scene. 'Music has always been a serious thing with me' was an outlook he often related in similar ways.[1] Although many improvising musicians became enamoured to the modernist sound elements of bebop whilst working in the dominant swing industry, Jackson didn't 'pay his dues' as a member of the popular big bands of the era, like so many of his colleagues had done before their involvement with the new jazz orthodoxy. In many ways, this demonstrated the small but pivotal age difference between him and older practitioners, as well as the changes in the musical customs of the time. Instead—and

[1] DeMicheal, 'Jackson of the MJQ', 20. Retellings include Rusch, 'Milt Jackson', 46.

although Red Norvo, had already introduced the vibraphone to the new jazz of the time—Jackson's early musical endeavours were saturated by his close interaction with bebop's pioneers. A year after his discharge from the military, and upon his move to New York, he quickly found himself in the hub of the jazz scene, performing with some of the most notable jazz musicians of that era. Jackson recalled his first impression of 52nd Street with wonder: 'It was remarkable and totally unbelievable'. He remembered that he had already visited New York for a weekend, on a pass, noting that he attended every club and seeing Lionel Hampton at the Apollo theatre. He met Gillespie briefly but returned to Detroit, only to come back to New York in the fall of 1945. 'I got what little money I could, packed my clothes and came back to New York. And in three weeks after I had gotten back to New York, I had a job with Dizzy'.[2]

Upon his arrival to New York Jackson moved in with Gillespie and his wife Loraine at 2040, 7th Ave. When he had to move out, he noted jokingly, he moved in with saxophonist Sonny Stitt in Brooklyn.[3] Jackson joined Gillespie's newly established group, in an all-star line-up that included Charlie Rouse, Max Roach and Ray Brown, for an engagement in the Brown Derby, on Connecticut avenue, Washington, D.C., in 1945.[4] Reflecting on the circumstances of his hiring—and in contrast to Gillespie's recollection—Jackson remembered that he went to Washington for two weeks with Gillespie to perform at a night club.[5] 'Shortly thereafter when we returned to New York, we turned round and with the six-piece band including Charlie and Ray, we went to California', Jackson remembered.[6] For some reason Bud Powell and Max Roach couldn't make it, Jackson recalled, and the trumpeter employed his old colleague from Philadelphia Stan Levey on drums and the former member of his quintet for the Three Deuces sessions, Al Haig, on piano.[7] Jackson was, as the

[2] Shipton, *Groovin' High*, 153. Dawkins 'Howard University Jazz Oral History Project', 78.

[3] Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 300.

[4] Jackson interviewed by Brian Parker (accessed 7 February 2016): http://jazz-radio.fm. By the end of my PhD studies the website seems to be no longer active. However, Jackson confirms this information in an interview with Arthur Dawkins. See Dawkins, 'Howard University Jazz Oral History Project: Milt Jackson', (1984): http://library.howard.edu/Jazz/miltjackson (accessed 11 December 2017).

[5] Transcription of an interview for the BBC with Charles Fox. Gillespie often communicated that it was Jackson who was called upon to replace Parker although it was Lucky Thompson who did. I am very grateful to Alyn Shipton for confirming this information via email (June 2015). Jackson recalled this information in the interviews with Brian Parker and Arthur Dawkins listed above.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Jackson interviewed by Brian Parker.

portmanteau phrase has it, at the right place, at the right moment.[8] Two weeks after their arrival on the West Coast, the group recorded for AFRS Jubilee radio show. These recordings provide a valuable document for the musical products of the Gillespie–Parker collaboration; one that has a unique place in jazz history. They portray the band in a more relaxed style, not having to tail the performance to the length constraints of 78-rpm discs. Jackson can be heard soloing in 'Dizzy Atmosphere' in what is a valuable document of his presence with Parker and Gillespie and demonstrates a clear emphasis on learning the musical language of the time.[9]

The idea that Dizzy's arrival in California at Billy Berg's club in Hollywood was a milestone in the spread of bebop music, as well as a complete disaster, is somehow inaccurate Alyn Shipton explains.[10] Ira Gitler, for example, is among many who noted that audiences met the group with a sense of indifference, even though the band was possibly among the best small groups in the bebop era.[11] It is fair to assume that the music and the presence of white and black musicians received mixed responses from audiences. Jackson remembered that 'business was tremendous'. He noted that the band did three shows a night, along with three other acts including Slim Gaillard and his trio, Harry 'The Hipster' Gibson doing a solo piano set.[12] In this stimulating environment, Jackson found fertile ground for experimentation. He furthered his knowledge in bebop and acquired several traits of the jazz style which he used as points of departure for variations in improvisation. He enthused: 'I was in seventh heaven, three times tripled over. Man, I was getting the best education. I was going to the best conservatory in the world, every single night for eight solid weeks, and I loved every second and every minute'. [13] Jackson absorbed the jazz style of the time as an active member of the jazz scene as well as through the informal instruction he received from the musicians with whom he interacted. This idea of orality in jazz, of an apprentice learning their craft from their master, still commands enormous respect within the jazz community but, as Prouty notes, it varies greatly among musicians. As Prouty notes, 'informal musical apprenticeships are the stuff of legend; musical pedigrees are often measured through

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[8] Jackson earned his card playing in the house band at Clark Monroe's Uptown House, featuring vocalist Little Jimmy Scott. Transcriptions of an interview with Dawkins 'Howard University Jazz Oral History Project', 76.

[9] *Dizzy Gillespie and His Bebop Six,* Spotlite (E) SPJ 123

[10] Shipton, *Groovin' High*, 154.

[11] Ira Gitler, *Swing to Bop: An Oral History of the Transition in Jazz in the 1940s* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 160.

[12] Dawkins 'Howard University Jazz Oral History Project', 101.

[13] Shipton, *Groovin' High*, 153.

performances with older, more experienced players.'[14] The implication is that performing with older musicians involves some sort of pedagogical interaction. In this context, such learning is generally described as 'oral' with information passed on through word of mouth or through observation.[15]

Drawing on recent research into cognition as it manifests itself in everyday activity, Jackson's position in Gillespie's group could be described in terms of a 'cognitive apprenticeship', two words that are most often encountered in different contexts.[16] Cognition here refers to the way with which learning takes places, whilst apprenticeship describes the process whereby a master teaches their skill to an apprentice. Cognitive apprenticeships advocate for the activity being taught to be modelled in real-world situations and maintain that, naturally, the context in which learning takes place is fundamental. As Allan Collins and others propose, 'situations might be said to co-produce knowledge through activity. Learning and cognition, it is now possible to argue, are fundamentally situated'.[17] I do not wish to draw too direct a link between cognitive apprenticeships as applied in education systems and Jackson's learning the jazz of the time but one can easily see in this formulation the similarities with his tenure in Gillespie's group. Although one would assume that the young Jackson was explicitly studying the jazz style of the time, he was also exposed to the implicit processes involved, where he would observe, enact, and practise them. Through direct interaction, therefore, he placed himself within the framework of the jazz idiom and evinced an understanding of its sonic requirements. 'I was locked into the style that Dizzy and Bird created, and that's how I really got in on the ground floor of that movement,' Jackson himself noted.[18] The result was proficiency in the bebop style and the ability to 'speak' the new musical language fluently. Performing with some of bop's most distinct musicians earned Jackson prestige in the jazz scene and supported his growing sense of the tradition that he and

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[14] Prouty, 'Orality, Literacy and Mediating Musical Experience: Rethinking Oral Tradition in the Learning of Musical Improvisation', 318.

[15] The importance of apprenticeships in jazz has often been highlighted. For example, Paul F. Berliner's ethnography accounts several instances of the apprenticeship system in jazz: see Berliner, Paul F Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 38, 50, 51, 58, 123. On a personal note it has been pointed out too by my teacher, Hal Galper, during my studies at the State University of New York at Purchase (2011–12). Some of Galper's thoughts with respect to the importance of apprenticeships can be found on his personal website: http://www.halgalper.com/articles/the-challenge-from-the-past/ (accessed 1 February 2017).

[16] Allan Collins, John Seely Brown, Susan E.Newman and the Alto Research Center, *Cognitive Apprenticeships: Teaching the Craft of Reading, Writing and Mathematics (Technical Reports No. 403)* (BBN Laboratories, Cambridge, Massachusetts: January 1987).

[17] Brown, *et al.*, 'Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning', 32.

[18] Woodard, 'Milt Jackson: Elegant Vibrations', Jazz Times (September 1999): https://jazztimes.com/features/milt-jackson-elegant-vibrations/ (accessed 3 February 2016).

his colleagues advocated. 'His creative roots are in the 1940s, his present and future in the ultimate extension of all that was implied in and by that intensely creative period in jazz history,' David Burnett James remarked.[19]

Jackson's adaptation of the novel jazz style reflected a generation of musicians whose innovations became some of jazz's greatest artistic triumphs. Through them, as Ramsey notes, 'jazz became a bona fide "Art", an expression that is considered by many an elitist music deserving formally trained devotees, a vigorous criticism, and a rigorous scholarship'.[20] Setting himself in bebop's orbit, the young vibist was exposed to its competitive, and legendary, after-hours jam sessions and cutting contests, demonstrating heroic displays of virtuosic ability and moving himself into the proving ground for musical manhood. Intense and aggressive virtuosity constituted, after all, the heart of the bebop aesthetic. But like other practising bebop musicians, Jackson was also strategically placed within a matrix of issues attendant to the jazz life, a constellation of concerns regarding musical and social style, aesthetics and performativity, influence and originality, and masculinity and identity.[21] Beyond the musical realm bebop was as much an outlet for self-expression as well as 'a means for identity formation to an emergent youth culture seeking a political and social voice'.[22] As a result, Jackson's embrace of modern jazz of the 1940s is explored as a symbol that created a unique social sphere within American culture. By adopting bebop's musical language and trademark elements Jackson continued the work of Young, Parker, and Gillespie to name but three, in linking early and late musical practices, whilst at the same time adopting what Eric Lott has called 'a politics of style', describing the mode of cultural work that the music achieved in its time.[23]

4.2 One More Time: Issues of a jazz tradition

> *Jazz, like the country which gave it birth, is fecund in its inventiveness, swift and traumatic in its developments and terribly wasteful of its resources.*[24]
>
> Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act*

> *The singer of tales is at once the tradition and an individual actor. His manner of composition differs from that used by a writer in that the oral poet makes no conscious effort to break the traditional phrases and incidents; he is forced by the*

[19] David Burnett James, 'Milt Jackson', *Jazz Journal* 28, no. 12 (December 1975), 32.

[20] Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 28.

[21] Ibid., 156.

[22] Hollerbach, '(Re)voicing Tradition', 156.

[23] Lott, 'Double V, Double Time: Bebop's Politics of Style'.

[24] Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 133.

> *rapidity of composition in performance to use these traditional elements. To him they are not merrily necessary, however; they are also right. He seeks no others, and yet he practices great freedom in his use of them because they are themselves flexible. His art consists not so much in learning through repetition the timeworn formulas as the variability to compose and recompose the phrases for the idea of the moment on the pattern established by the basic formulas. He is not a conscious iconoclast, but a traditional creative artist. His traditional style also has individuality […]*[25]
>
> Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales*

In this primarily conceptual section, I examine the overworked concept of the jazz tradition, which, as with other topics in this thesis, requires consideration of sometimes contentious aspects of jazz performance and historiography. It is necessary to explain the occurrence of 'the tradition' in jazz discourse and to clarify how Jackson negotiated a relationship with the musical and social practices of his time. My intent is theoretical: I seek to pose the problem, sharpen the concepts and identify the pertinent categories of evidence. I propose a brief historical view of the subject, to provide a perspective for the task of interpreting jazz performance practice at the time of Jackson's upbringing. To do so, I follow a path familiar from the previous chapter and examine the concept of tradition through Jackson's musical outputs and contemporaneous interviews. Jackson is framed in the debate by adopting an approach that invests less in the ideology of the jazz tradition as an aesthetic phenomenon. Instead my methodology is more responsive to, as Scott DeVeaux puts it, issues of historical particularity.[26] DeVeaux's seminal work proposed that the acceptance of jazz as art music in the 1940s and 50s was, as I described in the previous chapter, linked to perceptions of the music as being evolutionary in nature. Consequently, constructs and oversimplification characterised any subsequent exegesis for the emergence of novel jazz styles.

One way to respond to the task of unmasking the jazz tradition would be to break the notion that there exists a uniform understanding of the concept. Instead, depending on one's position, I would argue that multiple understandings are in constant play which need to be unmasked with a more nuanced and historically informed reading of the problem. These however, can be broadly grouped into two categories. First, 'the jazz tradition' is used in a broad sense in a sizeable corpus of literature, film, discography and broadcasts to describe a convention that has been invented, constructed and socially maintained in institutions and

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[25] Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 4-5.

[26] Scott DeVeaux, 'Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography', *Black American Literature Forum* 25, no. 3 (1991), 553.

organised contexts of all kinds. In this first category jazz is bound up in the social and institutional form of a tradition that provides a ground for its construction, reproduction and transformation. It results in a social condition that affords certain kinds of musical practice, permeating the intimate sociality and imagined jazz community. 'The tradition' refers more to the debate concerning the historical development and changes of jazz music, the dissemination of historical and biographical information as well as anecdotal stories rather than musical style. Second, in more practical terms, for musicians operating within a particular idiom such as bebop or straight-ahead jazz, 'the tradition' refers to a focused, more designated musical practice of which the origins are not entirely traceable but rather recognisable within a brief and dateable period, and which established itself by processes of formalisation and ritualization.[27] Here I intend to highlight the autonomy of distinctive forms of sociality mediated in the jazz tradition, acknowledging at the same time their interference or interrelations. In this respect, I want to include in my designation of 'the tradition' not only the transmission of musical custom as proposed by Kenneth Prouty but also specific musical devices that define the jazz style at various times in this music's history.[28]

Beginning with its legend-steeped foundation, the jazz-tradition concept is a model of understanding that espouses a Darwinist evolution of styles and players of the same instrument and across centres of excellence with the aim to demonstrate an uninterrupted continuity of the tradition from the earlier traces of the music up to recent times. Advocates of this notion of tradition invest in an imaginary unity supposedly underlying this music's trajectory: notoriously from New Orleans' ragtime and blues-influenced early styles, to Chicago early jazz, to New York swing music, bebop and West Coast jazz; a path that includes musical developments that succeed one another as well as geographical coordinates; and a form of imaginary knowledge that transcends national and geographical borders and links practitioners into a seamless continuum. 'Let's take Louis Armstrong through Roy Eldridge into Dizzy Gillespie. That music was a natural transition', Milt Jackson noted in a similar spirit.[29] Historical research has yet to unveil the extent to which musicians, as in Jackson's case, considered this 'natural transition' of jazz styles in the twenties and thirties to be plausible.

What is certain is that such formalistic approaches were encouraged by a plethora of

[27] For a discussion of 'mainstream' or 'straight-ahead' in jazz: Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away*, 6.

[28] Prouty, 'Orality, Literacy and Mediating Musical Experience: Rethinking Oral Tradition in the Learning of Musical Improvisation', 317-317.

[29] Danson, 'Milt Jackson', 5.

external pressures, as for example by the institutionalisation of jazz in the curricula of American universities, which Marshall Stearns led with the introduction of university jazz clubs as a faculty member at Cornell in 1947.[30] Stearns also initiated the inclusion of jazz courses at New York University, 'Perspectives in Jazz' and 'Giants in Jazz', the latter suggesting the study of jazz history as a form of hagiography: a history of giants, myths, legends and romance. Such efforts considered jazz as a music evolving by fusing stylistic shifts and by integrating established conventions and new compositional devices.[31] John Gennari notes that the evolutionary narrative of these lectures was well received by jazz musicians because they demonstrated the usability of the past as an impetus for future invention. 'We inherited something that we hope everybody listens [to] and passes it on', Max Roach and Louis Hayes noted on one occasion.[32] Similarly, in an exchange of opinions with Charlie Parker via the press, Gillespie favoured an all-encompassing view of jazz: of bebop as emerging from earlier styles.[33]

Like Stearns, the work of cultural commentators and critics of the time foreshadowed this viewpoint. Hugues Panassié, for example, whose work was influenced by metaphors of growth and evolution, saw jazz art as a growing organism.[34] Panassié 'worshipped negritude' and did more to spread the gospel of black American jazz than anyone else in his home country, France.[35] Similarly, following the emergence of bebop, Ross Russell, in a series of articles he published in 1948, maintained that 'the real nature of jazz history is organic', arguing that jazz is a 'living cultural form' that 'constantly extends, reaffirms and replenishes itself'.[36] More recently, in one of his articles about Jackson, James also embraced a linear trajectory of musical events, noting that 'one hungry generation does not tread down the one before it, or the whole of art becomes a trivial nonsense'.[37] More recently still, in his

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[30] Coady, *John Lewis and the Challenge of "Real" Black Music*, 34.

[31] Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cool: Jazz and the Critics*.

[32] Ed Enright, 'Louie Bellson, Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones and Max Roach: Once in a Life Time (November 1998)', in *Downbeat: The Great Jazz Interviews*, ed. Frank Alkyer and Ed Enright (New York: Hal Leonard Books, 2009).

[33]Parker believed that bebop developed independently from earlier jazz styles. Michael Levin and John S. Wilson, 'No Bop Roots in Jazz (September 9, 1949)', in *Downbeat: The Great Jazz Interviews* (New York: Hal Leonard, 2009), 33-36. John S Wilson, 'Bird Wrong: Bop Must Get a Beat (October 7, 1949)', in *Downbeat: The Great Jazz Interviews* (New York: Hal Leonard, 2009), 36-37.

[34] Panassié, *Le Jazz Hot: Le Guide De La Musique Swing Et Du Vrai Jazz*.

[35] Adam Adam Shatz, 'Le Jazz Hot', *The New York Review of Books*, July 2015 Issue. available online at http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2015/07/09/le-jazz-hot/ (accessed 10 December 2016).

[36] Ross Russell, 'Bebop', in *The Art of Jazz: Essays on the Nature and Development of Jazz*, ed. Martin Williams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

[37] James, 'Milt Jackson', 32.

ethnography of jazz improvisation Berliner noted that despite stylistic changes, jazz retained the continuity of 'certain underlying practices and values associated with improvisation, learning, and transmission'. Berliner felt this continuity lies at the core of 'the tradition', contributing to its integrity as a musical system, and emphasising musical ethos and custom.[38]

Although the debate surrounding the alleged continuity of jazz styles has its roots in correspondences among musicians, as demonstrated from Parker to Gillespie, Travis Jackson reminds us that 'the jazz tradition' is an artificially configured concept which he attributes to Martin Williams, Gunther Schuller and Hodeir. He notes that their analytical work also assembled a series of pantheons of greats into a form of jazz hagiography and artistic hierarchy to support their visions of jazz history.[39] As in Stearns' work, the ranking was chronological as well as qualitative and the narratives implied a certain pattern: each master left his innovations for the next to pick up and advance. Identifying a genealogy of masters has been a favourite obsession of historians in all kinds of music as, for example, demonstrated on one occasion by Giorgio Sanguinetti about maestros of the Neapolitan school.[40] Commentators about jazz modelled what they saw primarily as African American musical practices in the image of Western literacy and musical traditions, creating what Travis Jackson calls 'the master narrative of jazz history', a storyline compiled of building blocks, suggesting rapid advances in harmonic and rhythmic vocabulary, in which successive stylistic permutations were spearheaded by a few 'great men'.[41] From the schematic linearity of its structure to the hortative tone of its narration, the 'grand' has permeated each sequence of jazz history ever since.

Such views endured, together with the usage of the term, as for example demonstrated by the infamous TV series by Ken Burns, in which jazz history is structured cinematically as a series of vignettes telling the life stories of the most influential and prominent musicians in jazz history (but almost entirely avoiding discussion of jazz since the 1980s).[42] This is in striking contrast to other styles, as for example Will Straw shows for alternative rock culture, of which its pluralism by the 1980s was such that the emergence of new stylistic forms within

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[38] Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, 14.

[39] Jackson here specifically refers to Williams' work. See Martin Williams, *The Jazz Tradition* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970). Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away*.

[40] Giorgio Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento: History, Theory and Practice* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 57.

[41] Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away*, 28-29. This trend is especially apparent in Williams' work.

[42] David David Hajdu, 'Not Quite All That Jazz', *The New York Review of Books*, 8 February 2001 Issue. Available at https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2001/02/08/not-quite-all-that-jazz/ (accessed 16 December 2016).

it would rarely be accompanied by the claim that such forms represented a trajectory of movement for that culture as a whole.[43] For jazz, however, this linear manner of reception had political reverberations and roots in a pedigree portraying the antecedents of an enslaved population as geniuses, whose musical outputs came to represent North America's major cultural achievement. This debt of tradition, DeVeaux notes, reaching back in an unbroken continuum to the beginning of the century, belies attempts to portray African American people without a past–hence the appeal of an unambiguous and convincing historical narrative.[44] 'We are left with an impression of mysterious rootlessness,' Ralph Ellison explained, and the complexity of American cultural experience is oversimplified.[45]

What is often neglected, however, is that some of these attitudes had formed under very specific circumstances. For example, when advocating for the organic nature of jazz development Russell was the producer of Dial Records, a company for which several leading bebop artists recorded. His peace-offering approach is interpreted as one of reconciliation between otherwise opposing camps: bebop was widely neglected and Russell adopted this stance for the survival of his record production. To advance a similar idea, DeVeaux presents a point centred on the axis of three influential contemporaneous journals, *Jazzmen*, *Down Beat* and *Metronome*, which framed their content on different aesthetic grounds. He points out that the dispute between adherents of 1920s-style jazz and the popular swing music of the 1930s was resolved as an effort of reconciliation, to bring enthusiasts together and against the hostility of commercial interests, the indifferent public and the cultural establishment; a truce vulnerable only to the emergence of bebop.[46] Even that momentary fracture, however, was to be reconciled for reasons of survival; the very word which espouses an evolutionary concept of change.

Of course a generous amount of scholarship has pointed out that there is much to critique in the resulting narrative, which presents a jazz history as selective as the memories it

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[43] Will Straw, 'Systems of Articulation, Logics of Change: Communities and Scenes in Popular Music', *Cultural studies* 5, no. 3 (1991), 375.

[44] DeVeaux, 'Constructing the Jazz Tradition', 526. Black musicians' fight for legitimacy had to challenge the distinct and persistent subordination of black culture. Samuel Floyd maintained that black musicians at the turn of the previous century were amid a balancing act between the assimilation of European culture and the affirmation of practices rooted in African music; this condition highlights both the eclecticism of musicians and the fusing process of foreign, syncretic elements in jazz music.

[45] Ellison, *Shadow and Act*, 238.

[46] DeVeaux, 'Constructing the Jazz Tradition'.

attempts to organise.[47] David Hajdu, in response to Burns' *Jazz*, noted that ignoring other developments in jazz because they fail to accommodate an agenda is worse than bad history: it's politics.[48] Hollerbach returned to the issue of the jazz tradition, noting that 'espousing a linear, evolutionary narrative of jazz, wherein a succession of jazz styles is said to cohere within a unitary tradition, conventional jazz histories delete the enormous diversity within the music for the sake of a desired continuity'.[49] He explained that musical changes do not indicate a simple succession of musical idioms, each one displacing the one before, but rather 'they form a multi-layered complex of sonic possibilities and social identities that inflect […] aesthetic values and musical self-image'.[50] Similarly, in reviewing Schuller's work, Eric Hobsbawm wondered whether such a purely stylistic framework could provide a complete account for the development of jazz.[51]

Nevertheless, despite the criticism that it has received, this trope quickly became institutionalised and penetrated jazz institutions worldwide; from history and improvisation classes to comprehensive recordings, these by-products, children of 'the jazz tradition' were quickly boosted by an always profitable industry (as outlined in the literature review of this thesis). A further distinction needs be made: although in all music one encounters progressive versus more conservative attitudes, jazz quickly transformed into an instrument of nostalgia, reaching a level of reception in which traditionalists espouse earlier jazz styles at the expense of modernist inclinations and vice-versa. Neo-classicist movements such as early jazz and swing revivals often circulate in the market for the service and entertainment of patrons at corporate events, accompanied by appropriate dress code and dance. Such practices are not included in this consideration, nor are considered as being 'in the tradition'. Instead, they highlight that a retrospective aesthetic and custodial function of preserving and reviving the past are in fact proof that music under the umbrella of 'jazz' cannot move forward; or as DeVeaux put it: 'the struggle is over the act of definition that is presumed to lie at the

[47] Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away*, 29. For more discussion see: Gary Tomlinson, 'Cultural Dialogics in Jazz: A White Historian Signifies', *Black Music Research Journal* 11(1991). DeVeaux, 'Constructing the Jazz Tradition'.

[48] In an article/review of Ken Burns' movie *Jazz*, Hajdu criticised the film for adopting a similar storyline. Hajdu, 'Not Quite All That Jazz'.

[49] Hollerbach, '(Re)voicing Tradition', 160.

[50] Ibid., 156.

[51] Eric Hobsbawm, 'Some Like it Hot', *The New York Review of Books* (13 April 1989).

history's core; for it is an article of faith that some central essence named *jazz* remains constant throughout all the dramatic transformations that have resulted in modern day jazz'.[52]

The second understanding of the jazz tradition is related to the local, translocal and virtual scenes and their varied modes of musical activity.[53] It is this encounter that is most directly relevant to my analysis of Jackson's music. Nowadays several centres of musical activity are in correspondence (such as New Orleans, New York, Chicago, Detroit, California), within which music scenes operate under the umbrella of jazz. Thus, one may encounter contemporary jazz in Brooklyn, New York; straight-ahead jazz or bebop in Greenwich Village; or Latin jazz in the Spanish Harlem and in Queens. Music scenes, however, do not depend on an absence of social interaction but are often the very foundations on which embracing musical communities are built. Within the various scenes, individuals cross the artificial boundaries of such settings, either out of preference or out of necessity (to make a living, for example), registering and reinterpreting knowledge and repertoire from one setting to another. Even though scenes are traversed by wider social identity formations (from the most concrete and intimate to the most abstract of collectivities), stylistic boundaries persist despite a flow of personnel across communities. In other words, stylistic difference does not depend on an absence of mobility, contact or information. Rather, it involves processes of exclusion and incorporation by which discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership. To give one example, jazz performance routinely involves the dictates not of a single authorial intention but of multiple ones; the repertoire constantly undergoes revision, and the music often bears an abundance of signatures. Consequently, while all scenes may communicate via cyberspace, recordings or touring artists, local scenes can communicate via geographical contiguity. This perception of the music scene is three-dimensional.

At the same time, while operating within a scene or a collection of scenes, practitioners situate themselves within a historically removed practice, *signifying* jazz, as Louis Gates explained, by learning musical material, varying it and reinterpreting it. A music

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[52] DeVeaux, 'Constructing the Jazz Tradition', 528.

[53] Andy Bennett and Richard A Peterson, 'Introducing Music Scenes', in *Music Scenes: Local, Translocal and Virtual*, ed. Andy Bennett, and Richard A Peterson (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004), 2. My choice to allocate scenes into these three categories refers directly to the title and work of Bennett and Peterson. These scenes are by no means separable but rather entities that communicate with each other. In this perspective, it is often more useful to consider Henri Lefebvre's urban theory and production of social space as a means of better understanding how music scenes form and operate; for example, the transition from an absolute space such as that of a music venue to the more complex spatiality of the socially constructed jazz scene. By virtual the authors refer to what I described as an imagined scene in the previous chapter.

scene such as that of mainstream or straight-ahead jazz and bebop—as a collection of practitioners operating in both its designed and imagined worlds—is firmly anchored to its past, adding a fourth dimension of space of influence because musicians engage constantly with previous performances. Tradition, then, in this example comes to define the ways in which practitioners have established a distinctive relationship with a performance practice: whether this is contemporary and local, or distant (the term referring to both a timeline and remote geographical locations). Tradition is therefore instrumental in the way musicians navigate space and time. As a mechanism, this understanding supports the notion of the jazz tradition as a social strategy for dealing with change, and confirms not the unity of jazz styles but rather the degree of abstraction and attachment to a style as well as a sense of belonging in a space of musical co-operation.

The musical and non-musical traditions of jazz do not form a coherent whole but instead contain an aggregate of diverse customs, aesthetics and sensibilities. The cosmopolitan character of jazz, its power of assimilation and attentiveness to change, together with certain sets of customs such as improvisation, rhythm, form and instrumentation, endowed jazz with a sense of participating in an affective alliance, which is altogether a rather different approach to the canonised concept of the jazz tradition. One of the issues that revival movements or modern musicians who play 'in the tradition' have brought to the surface is that these musical preferences break away from the concept of continuous time as they attempt to recreate a link in a process of transmission long broken. The passing on of musical custom from one knower to another and the ability to evoke a practice that was right behind a current moment began to fade out when musicians started to have access to recordings and began to reproduce a historical moment. As Jed Rasula points out:

> And so the lessons at the phonograph went on: Ben Webster copying Frank Trumbauer's solo on 'Singin' the Blues', and Lester Young ordering Tram's records by mail, arranging for them to be forwarded to locations where his family's band would be playing. As late as 1956 he claimed 'I Imagine I can still play all the solos off the record' […] Charlie Parker used to adjust the speed of his turntable so he could adapt Young's tenor solos to the pitch of his own alto, as he copied them note for note.[54]

As jazz developed, processes of internalisation from within and of modernisation from

[54] Rasula, 'The Memory of Media: The Seductive Menace of Records in Jazz History', 141-42. This also happened in the pre-phonograph era. For example, both Duke Ellington and Count Basie used to slow down piano rolls of James P. Johnson's stride pieces so that they could copy the finger patterns.

without served to produce complex diversities rather than a coherent continuity. Tradition, in the post-recorded-jazz era, is non-temporaneous: the paradox lies in that a listener can evoke jazz of a remote geographical location and the 1940s as the starting point of a single tradition.

In this respect, Hollerbach's ethnography is helpful, especially his interview with guitarist LC who identifies himself as a modern bebop musician. Jazz culture encompasses a wide variety of customs of which many are not musical. Hollerbach explains that, for his subject, knowing bebop is as much a matter of living as it is of learning its technical and stylistic requirements. Knowingness here has many planes and is directed not towards musical knowledge but also towards a signification within a dialogical understanding of the music's history, its multiplicity of voices and engagements with them. We see here the interaction between wider social relations and jazz, where jazz is the primary mechanism for the mutual articulation of musically imagined communities and social identities. For LC, access to that knowledge—'to a way of being in the world', as he put it—was made possible by tracing the music to its perceived source.[55] Here, LC's abstraction of the tradition is non-temporaneous. The ways with which the guitarist manipulates the space around him, the music scene, involve a privileging role of the geographical locale (New York) that, for them, guarantees the historical continuity of the specific style. A similar example is given by Taylor Atkin's study of jazz in Japan: narratives linking jazz exclusively with the United States have cause an 'authenticity complex' in Atkins words, an anxious insecurity regarding their own place in the music.[56] Born has stressed the power of music to animate imagined communities, aggregating its adherents into virtual collectivities and publics based on musical and other identifications. She notes that 'there are musically imagined communities that […] may reproduce or memorialise emergent identity formations, generate purely fantasised identifications, or prefigure emergent identity formations by forging novel social alliances'.[57]

In such formulations practitioners situate themselves within a specific style in which performance encompasses a wide variety of practices, some that exceed musical production, and manipulate space and time to learn new ways of, as Timothy Rice puts it, 'being in the

[55] Hollerbach, '(Re)voicing Tradition', 157.

[56] E. Taylor Atkins, *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

[57] Georgina Born, *Rationalising Culture: IRCAM, Boulez and the Institutionalisation of the Musical Avant-Garde.* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1995), 381. Georgina Born, 'Music and the Representation/articulation of Sociocultural Identities', in *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, ed. Georgina Born, and David Hesmondhalgh (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2000), 31-37.

world'; to manipulate communal status by acquiring competence in its central tasks. [58] For modern bebop musicians, this process results in appropriating jazz music and culture by dis-appropriating themselves, an argument situated at the core of hermeneutics. Ellison's succinct take on this is informative:

> There is in this a cruel contradiction implicit in the art form itself. For true jazz is an art of individual assertion within and against the group. Each true jazz moment. . . springs from a contest in which the artist challenges all the rest; each solo flight, or improvisation, represents (like the canvases of a painter) a definition of his identity; as individual, as member of the collectivity and as a link in the chain of tradition. Thus because jazz finds its very life in improvisation upon traditional materials, the jazz man must lose his identity even as he finds it.[59]

Ellison's words suggest how 'being in the world' allows jazz practitioners to form and sustain a social reality. His formulation resonates in recent sociological approaches to music; Antoine Hennion has stressed the intimate mediation between music lover and musical sound in the co-production of taste, where taste is a grasped as a mutually transformational relationship cultivated through a range of practices and techniques. He notes that 'bodies, spaces, duration, gestures, regular practice, technical devices' all point to taste as an accomplishment.[60] Music therefore 'transforms those who take possession of it', which results in 'the co-formation of a music and of those who make it and listen to it'.[61] While music, however, is particularly important to the history of black identity, this use of music, as well as that aesthetic process through which we discover ourselves by forging our relations to others, is not confined to black cultures. Frith, for example, has demonstrated several alternative realities in the British jazz scene.[62]

Such analyses make palpable the bidirectional operation of the jazz tradition: it generates and conditions human subjectivities and socialites, while its characteristics are constituted in discourse and practice, as well as through its manifold socialites and socio-

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[58] Rice here cites the work of Heidegger and Ricoeur: Rice, *May it Fill Your Soul*, 4-5. Heidegger, *Being and Time*. Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[59] Ellison, *Shadow and Act*, 234. I am aware that the more I chart the complexity of a historical moment the harder it becomes to tell the story convincingly. The more I discuss the concept of the tradition, the harder it seems to be able to define it. It will however become clearer in the closing comment of this section and will become understandable in the analysis by pointing at specific compositional devices and metaphorical language that have established the concept of 'tradition' in jazz.

[60] Quoted in Born, *Rationalising Culture*, 378.

[61] DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, 40.

[62] Simon Frith, 'Music and Identity', in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall, and Paul du Gay (London: SAGE, 1996), 119.

technical arrangements. Eric Drott noted that 'genre […] constitutes social groups and are constituted by them'.[63] Tia DeNora takes a similar stance, arguing that 'music is active within social life: just as music may be constructed in relation to things outside it, so too, things outside music may be constructed in relation to music'.[64] The jazz tradition conjures up and animates imagined communities, aggregating its listeners into virtual collectives and publics based on musical and other identifications. In this pursuit, music is instructive in conceptualising the materialisation of the jazz tradition, because it opens new perspectives on issues of materiality, mediation and affect. Tradition being such an abstract concept, it also allows a medium to debate on identity, offering novel social analytics by relating to the copious socialites of music. Within the concept of the tradition, however, music produces its own diverse social relations: affiliation, cooperation or alienation, amounting to a sociality that engenders musical practice and experience. Music requires and stimulates associations between a diverse range of subjects and objects—between musicians, between musician and instrument, composer and score, recording and sound engineer, between sound and topoi. In this respect—to paraphrase Born— jazz is a remarkably diffusing cultural object: an aggregation of sonic, social, corporeal, discursive, visual, technological and temporal mediations, a music assemblage whereby this process is understood as a characteristic constellation of such heterogeneous mediations.[65] The jazz tradition then becomes the dynamic product of an adaptive group of participants. It has emphasis on *movement*, specifically, and is as a signifier that encourages the reading of jazz history as a product of human labour, subjected to changes, adjustments and constant redefinition.

Jackson's understanding of bebop was as much that of a musical style as a sense of identity. Like many young men in the bebop movement, Jackson found in Gillespie's group a fertile space for experimentation, a patriarchal (as Guthrie Ramsey put it) performance space and a way of being in the world. [66] Performances were accompanied by a matrix of issues attendant on a jazz life and a constellation of concerns regarding musical style and social identity, aesthetics and performativity, influence and originality, and issues of gender. This subcultural way of life offered an outlet for self-expression as well as a means for identity

[63] Eric Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution: Cultural Politics and Political Culture in France, 1968-1981* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2011).

[64] DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, 40.

[65] Georgina Born, 'Music and the Materialisation of Identities', *Journal of Material Culture* 16, no. 4 (2011).

[66] Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 121.

formation to an emergent youth culture seeking a political and social voice.[67] Yet, despite the infinity of influences, the musical knowledge that Jackson acquired was grounded in more local circumstances before the 1940s and, in many ways, this occurred by more 'traditional' methods. He matured in musical circles that defined 'bebop', 'mainstream' or 'straight-ahead' jazz and modern jazz music more broadly. The musical customs which Jackson understood as having a continuous development (cited earlier) were shaped over time by musicians who, like him, received their technical and artistic legacy mainly from forebears or by attending performances and copying what they had heard. In turn this knowledge was passed on to successors. Several romantic jazz tales testify to this. A survey of his music reveals that most of the musical material that he employed in his improvisations developed up until the 1960s and, thereafter, Jackson developed in different ways, some that include developments in sound, repertoire and performance settings. But the musical knowledge that preceded his recordings was acquired in those formative years and to a large extent remained unchanged.

I also want to explore the importance of cultural memory in any understanding of a tradition in jazz rooted in African American culture. Jackson's formulation, as well as Roach's cited above, have resonances with an anecdotal story shared by Sidney Bechet who noted that 'there was something happening all the time to my people, a thing the music had to know for sure. There had to be a memory of it behind the music'. Speaking of his grandfather Omar who died a slave as a young man, Bechet observed that 'Inside him he'd got the memory of all the wrong that's been done to my people. That what memory is […] When a blues is good, that kind of memory just grows up inside it'. He continued: 'If you're any good musicianer, it's Omar's song you're singing'. Bechet's narrative is so informative that I will quote from it at length:

> I met many a musicianer in many a place after I struck out from New Orleans, but it was always the same: If they was any good, it was Omar's song they were singing. It was the long song, and the good musicianers, they all heard it behind them. They all had an Omar, somebody like an Omar, somebody that was *their* Omar. It didn't need just recollecting somebody like that: it was the feeling of someone back there—hearing the song like it was coming up from somewhere.

[67] I am hesitant to employ the term 'subculture', conscious that it may assume that a society has one culture and that bebop, in this case, constitutes its single variation. The terming of bebop served to describe the music, dress and deportment appropriate to the novel jazz style of the time but also functioned as a cultural recourse for fans and critics alike, enabling them to forge a collective expression of alternative identity and label a certain cultural deviation from the mainstream jazz scene.

> A musicianer could be playing it in New Orleans, or Chicago, or New York; he could be playing it in London, in Tunis, in Paris, in Germany. I heard it played in all those places and many a more. But no matter where it's played, you gotta hear it starting way behind you. There's the drum beating from Congo Square and there's the song starting in a field just over the trees. The good musicianer, he's playing *with* it, and he's playing *after* it. He's finishing something. No matter what he's playing, it's the long song that started back there in the South.
>
> It's the remembering song. There's so much to remember.[68]

Bechet reminds us that oral history can have an unusual and poignant impact on cultural history. Samuel Floyd maintains that, for Bechet and for black music broadly, 'the remembering song' was expressive of cultural memory and of the translation of memory into sound and the opposite, which the author traces back to the slave experience of African Americans. He argues that the musical retentions and performance practices of African American music preserve this memory, 'recalling the mysteries of myth and the trappings of ritual long after they are no longer functional'. He goes as far as to propose that this has been passed as a sort of 'mental trace', passed on from descendant to descendant.[69] He suggests that all 'black-music making is driven by and permeated with the memory of things from the cultural past and that recognition of the viability of such memory should play a role in the perception and criticism of works and performances of black music'.[70] For Floyd, this cultural and musical continuity exists in all musical genres of the black cultural experience, a continuity that he traces from the ring shout to recent forms of black American music. He maintains that 'cultural memory, as a reference to vaguely "known" musical and cultural processes and procedures, is a valid and meaningful way of accounting for the subjective, spiritual quality of the music and aesthetic behaviours of a culture'.[71]

A closer reading of Floyd highlights the fact that this continuity, advocated from Jackson, Roach and Bechet existed for sound pedagogical purposes too. Legends in African culture had some sort of historical basis. Although they were embellished by imaginative and fictional elements, they occupied a station somewhere between myth and historical narrative, and were didactic and tutorial. Alan Lomax for example noted that African dances were 'designed to educate boys and girls for their adult sexual roles in a polygynous world'.[72]

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[68] Samuel Floyd, *The Power of Black Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 9-10.

[69] Ibid., 9.

[70] Ibid., 10.

[71] Ibid., 9.

[72] Alan Lomax, 'Africanism in New World Music', in *Haitian Potential: Research and Resources of Haiti*, ed. Vera Rubin and Richard Schaedel (New York: Teachers College Press, 1975 [1967]), 49.

Together myths, tales and legends served as inspiration and material for both African music and the ceremony and ritual of which that music is part.[73] We see how Floyd's analysis underpins several jazz tales; how the activities that took place in the ring were planned and the behaviour of participants was regulated by dance chiefs, drummers, leaders and regulators of many sorts. The choreography, music, tales and participants were focused towards a primary ceremonial objective; Dance, Drum and Song, together with the reciting of myths and sometimes the donning of masks, resulted in a 'complicated network of elements' that reinforced the unity of the community, transcending daily life.[74] This coordination was necessary for the success of the ritual and of the community. Could it be, then, that the understanding of the jazz tradition in the black community was rooted in broader archetypes as described above?

It is not necessary to generalise across the three thousand African ethnic groups that existed at the time in the African continent to observe that, despite their diversity, there were underlying similarities among African cultural practices, as demonstrated among others by Lomax and Kwabena Nkeita.[75] Traditional African American communities, such as that in which Jackson grew up, were concerned with highlighting individual expression within the community. They had rules whose primary purpose was the protection of the community itself, and we see how these rules extended to musical practices. Innovation in music, although largely personified in jazz, was celebrated in a non-individualistic way, hailing the community that fostered it and assimilating into the prevailing musical system. The innovations were not subversive; rather they were made on the verges of existing performance practices which guaranteed their absorption in the tradition. The linking concept here is narrative, structured time, temporal space: narrative gave jazz a dynamism and structure. According to Greg Tate,

> Someone once said that while Coleman Hawkins gave the jazz saxophone a voice, Lester Young taught it how to tell a story. That is, the art of personal confession is one jazz musicians must master before they can do justice by their tradition. I

[73] Floyd, *The Power of Black Music*, 10.

[74] Ibid., 26. Michel Huet, *The Dance, Art and Ritual in Africa* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 13. Charles Keil, *Tiv Song: The Sociology of Art in a Classless Society* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979), 247.

[75] Lomax, 'Africanism in New World Music'; Alan Lomax, 'The Homogeneity of African-Afro-american Musical Style', in *Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Norman E Whitten Jr. and Szwed John F. (New York: Free Press, 1970); J. H. Kwabena Nketia, *The Music of Africa* (New York: Norton, 1974).

> couldn't relate to Cecil's music until I learned to hear the story he was shaping out of both black tradition and his complex 'life as an American Negro'.[76]

Time, as in Bechett's formulation earlier, is important in understanding Greg Tate's appreciation of Cecil Taylor. The narrative that Tate describes accounts for an entanglement of aesthetics and ethics and draws on the African-American tradition of signifying. To paraphrase Frith, 'it puts into play an emotional effect, a collusion between performer and an audience which is engaged rather than detached, knowing rather than knowledgeable'.[77] Frith argues that we must understand popular music not to represent values but to embody them, and quotes from Christopher Waterman, who notes that 'the role of musical style, in the enactment of identity makes it not merely a reflexive but also a constitutive factor in the patterning of cultural values and social interaction'.[78]

I continue by examining the consequences of Jackson's involvement with the leading figures of the bebop movement and how their influence manifests itself in his music, from the vibist's first recorded performance with Dinah Washington, to his first professional engagements in the jazz Mecca and the forming of the Milt Jackson Quartet. I discuss his musical outputs along with a complex network of related critical and contextual information that helps to elucidate the early creative processes of this charismatic improviser. Through reference to recordings as well as contemporaneous reviews and newspapers the discussion focuses on how Jackson adapted the needs of jazz culture to the vibraphone and how the contested musical practices of bebop influenced his musical identity.

4.3 Emerging in Jazz: Jackson's first recordings

Jackson's first known recording, with Dinah Washington and Lucky Thompson in 1945, typifies the spirited creations that defined Jackson as a young player.[79] In 'Mellow Mama Blues' one hears what Hodeir expressed as 'the conflict between excursive harshness and excessive sentimentality that once hampered his style' (Example 4-1).[80]

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[76] Greg Tate, *Flyboy in the Buttermilk: Essays on Contemporary America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 25.
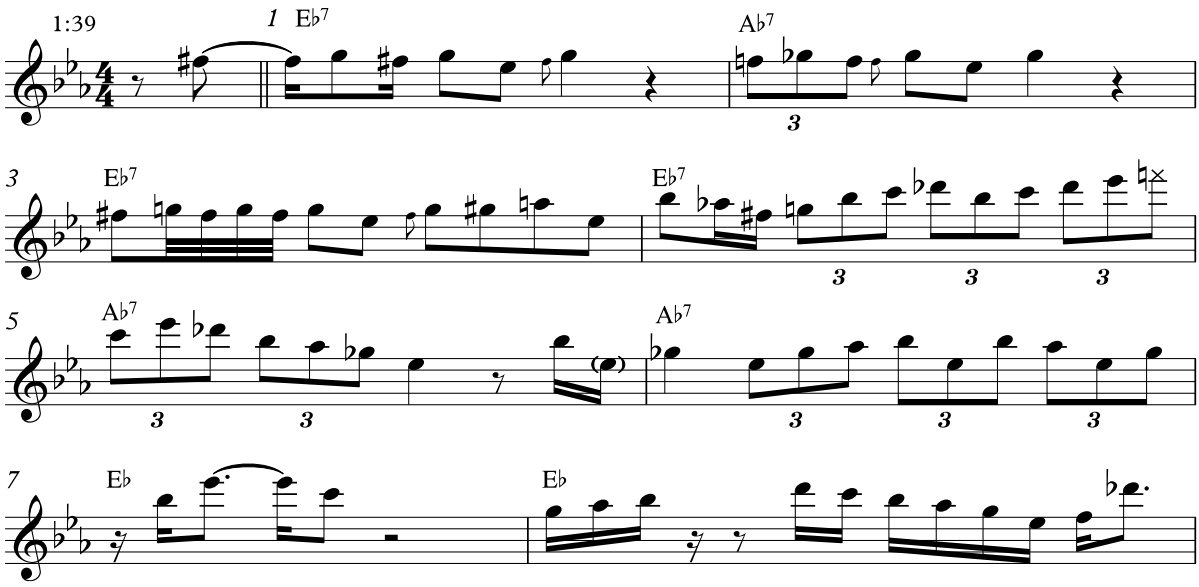
[77] Frith, 'Music and Identity', 117.

[78] Quoted in Ibid.

[79] 'Melow Mama Blues' (Apollo 371; Delmark DL-451), in: Dinah Washington With Lucky Thompson's All Stars (recorded December 13, 1945).

[80] Hodeir, 'Bag's Microgroove', 152.

Example 4-1. Excerpt, Jackson's solo on 'Mellow Mama Blues', mm. 1–8



Although Jackson's melodic lines lack the invention for which he later became renowned, and his articulation is less than perfect, the vibist is evidently acquainted with the mannerisms of bebop. His playing is balanced between a strong sense of swing phrasing, and prominent blues-inflected lines. Notwithstanding the inferior recording quality, Jackson's sharp sound and his hard attack are likely the product of his use of rubber mallets and deficiencies in the instrument itself.[81] Gillespie recalled the poor state of Jackson's early instruments, which 'sounded like milk bottles. They used to fall apart all the time'.[82] Several similar anecdotes exist. Randle, for example, remembered that 'Bags was playing the most tattered set of vibes I had ever seen, an octave and a half outfit held together, literally, by paper clips, rubber bands and string.' He concluded that, despite the poor quality of the instrument, Jackson's playing was 'remarkably fresh and exciting'.[83] Jackson remembered that 'Dizzy Gillespie had called Charlie Parker up and told Charlie that if I ever came down, he should let me play':

> Bird [Parker] was working at the Spotlight on 52nd Street. I went down to sit in and took this little set of vibes that looked like an ironing board. I could just fold it up, put a cover on it and carry it around. The manager of the club said, 'Man, what is that thing? Get that thing out of here!' He and Bird got into the biggest argument.

[81] As Neil Tesser explains, a prototype called the steel marimba appeared in 1916, but the vibraphone in its current pattern didn't develop until the mid-1920s. Neil Tesser, 'The Electric Guitar and Vibraphone in Jazz: Batteries Not Included', Bill Kirchner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 645-52.

[82] DeMicheal, 'Jackson of the MJQ', 19.

[83] Charles and Jackson, Soul Brothers, liner notes.

> Bird told him, 'Dizzy called up and told me to let this guy play. I want to hear him,' but to no avail.[84]

In perhaps the funniest of these accounts, Woody Herman recalled a trip to Cuba during which Jackson was using a set of vibes that might be described as a 'collapsible' model:

> In the middle of his solo on one number, the legs of the set started to spread out in opposite directions. Bags followed that set down, playing all the way. When he finished, he was almost on his hands and knees. The instrument, after all, still was soundable and Bags hadn't finished his solo, so he saw no reason to stop until he had.[85]

Commentators have characterized Jackson's early sound in different ways. For example, Hodeir described it as dry, metallic, aggressive and 'deliberately lacking in charm', while with regards to Jackson's record date with Washington, Jim Burns simply concluded that Jackson's staccato sound lent itself nicely to bebop improvising.[86] For Burns the vibist's focus on developing his soloing at the expense of his sound was simply a part of bebop's aesthetics.[87] Although Jackson eventually became known for the captivating sound that distinguished his improvisations, it is fair to say that there was indeed a hard-edged quality that accompanied the music of bebop musicians, as for example Thomas Owens has noted about the music of Charlie Parker:

> Perhaps the first feature of Parker's style to strike the ears is his tone quality; compared with that of swing-era predecessors, it was harsh, hard-edged. Its stark beauty contrasted sharply with the sweet and mellow timbres used by Johnny Hodges, Benny Carter, and other older alto saxophonists.[88]

The lyrical and musical content of Jackson's performance, the backgrounds of the participants, and its appearance in a specific historical moment and geographic setting have important implications for the criticism of black music of the 1940s. Sound was an important Afro-modernist modality for musicians of the time: in the new articulations of the virtuoso solo 'voice' that appear in bebop, jump blues and gospels; in the developments in accompaniment styles that supported those solo voices; and also in the sanctifying gestures that listeners perceived in the music.

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[84] Mattingly, '1996 PAS Hall of Fame', 15.

[85] From Nat Hentoff's sleeve notes on Plenty, Plenty Soul.

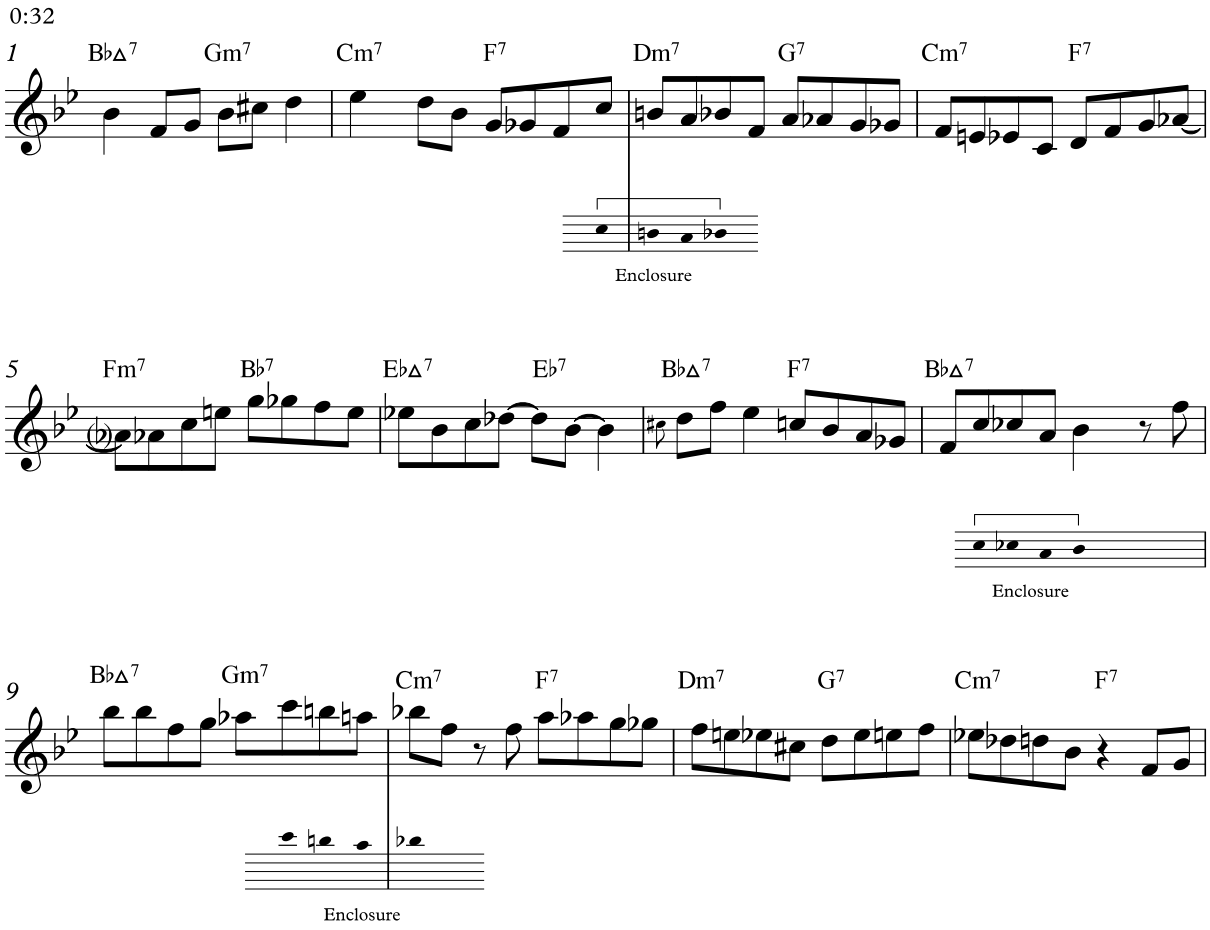
[86] Hodeir, 'Bag's Microgroove', 152. Jim Burns, 'Good Vibes', *Jazz & Blues* 2, no. 5 (August 1972), 7. Emphasis added

[87] Ibid.

[88] Thomas Owens, *Bebop: The Music and Its Players* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 29.

A take on ‘Anthropology’ a year later reveals a different Jackson: his attack is still sharp, but the vibist, now with Gillespie’s ensemble, seems entirely accustomed to bebop and its associated decorum.[89] In ‘Anthropology’ Jackson’s use of chromaticism and bebop scales is strong. Enclosures—also referred to as neighbour tones—appear frequently throughout the solo: for example, he uses the same notes to land on a B♭ three consecutive times, albeit with variable harmonic resolutions (Example 4-2 and Example 4-3).[90]
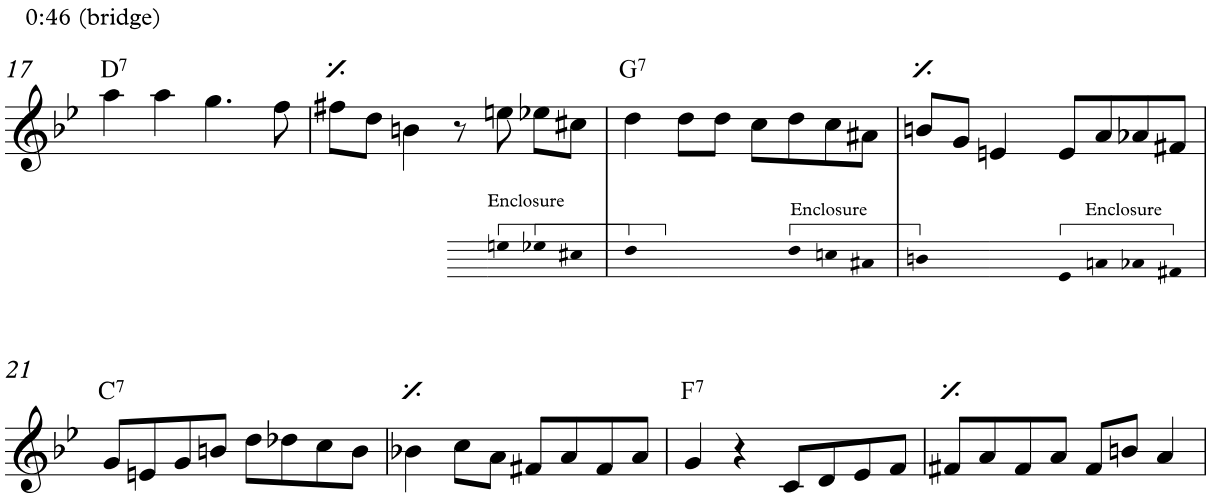
Example 4-2. Excerpt, Jackson’s solo, ‘Anthropology’, mm. 1–12



[89] The process of learning a musical style through varied realisations of patterns and compositional/improvisational devices is not exclusive to jazz. Albert Lord has argued similarly for South Slavic epic poetry and Benjamin Brinner for modal improvisation and Javanese gamelan music. See: Benjamin Brinner, *Knowing Music, Making Music* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 118, 156-7.

[90] From Dizzy Gillespie and His Orchestra, *Dizzy Gillespie: The Complete RCA Victor Recordings*. Bluebird (recorded in NY, 22 February 1946).

Example 4-3. Excerpt, 'Anthropology', mm.17–24



On Jackson's tenure in Gillespie's band, Don DeMicheal commented:

> Even though his [early] playing was sometimes wild, it hinted at his later style, most notably the use of grace notes and turns. The emotional content of his later playing is also evident, but it was a more extroverted soul in those days. Depth was yet to come.[91]
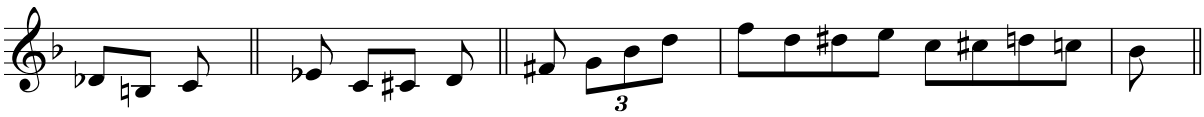
It should not be assumed that enclosures and other chromatic embellishments are indicative of ready-to-use patterns. Bebop involved considerable chromatic elaboration and improvisers had to apply several devices spontaneously (approach notes or enclosures, to name just two), to land on the chord tones and be in sync with the harmony. Palmer rightly noted that 'one of the hallmarks of bop performances is melodic grace' and musicians, like Jackson, achieved what he described as 'a beauty of line and a structural elegance' by employing such devices.[92] Typical of Jackson and bebop musicians, the vibist made frequent use of enclosures from two notes above and one below (hereafter abbreviated as a 2-1 enclosure), to approach his target notes. Owens has identified many similar devices in Parker's music whilst also noting their usage in the music of Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young and Roy Eldridge (Example 4-4). Owens notes that these chromatic notions, although hardly distinctive, were important components of the musical language of the time.[93]

[91] DeMicheal, 'Jackson of the MJQ', 19.

[92] Richard Palmer, 'Milt Jackson Revisited Part II', *Jazz Journal International* 39, no. 7 (1986), 14.

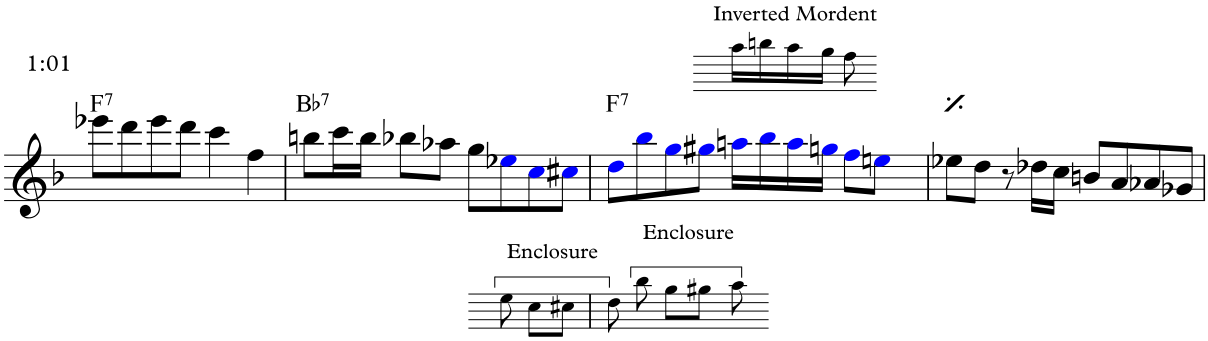
[93] Owens, *Bebop*, 32.

Example 4-4. Example of Charlie Parker's enclosures (transcription by Owens)



I cite Parker because he was a role model not only to Jackson but to jazz musicians worldwide. His compositional devices and solos were copied, studied, learned and, Owens reports, in many cases jazz musicians even recorded them.[94] Owens lists an inverted enclosure to the one repeated by Jackson in 'Anthropology' (a minor third leap downwards followed by a chromatic movement to reach the target note, shown in bar two of the above example, hereafter abbreviated as a 1-2 enclosure), as commonly used by the saxophonist. We encounter this enclosure notatim in Jackson's music in later years and as part of larger structures. For example, in 'Opus de Funk' Jackson performs the same enclosure twice (1-2), followed by an inverted mordent (Example 4-5).[95]

Example 4-5. Jackson's usage of the enclosure with the inverted mordent, 'Opus de Funk', mm. 13–16.



The inverted mordent, used by Jackson in 'Opus de Funk', is also listed under Parker's devices.[96] Owens explains that because of its simplicity, the mordent appears in almost any context and is a component of several figures, such as the one in the fourth measure below which Parker performed in his solo 'The Jumping Blues' and is the beginning of
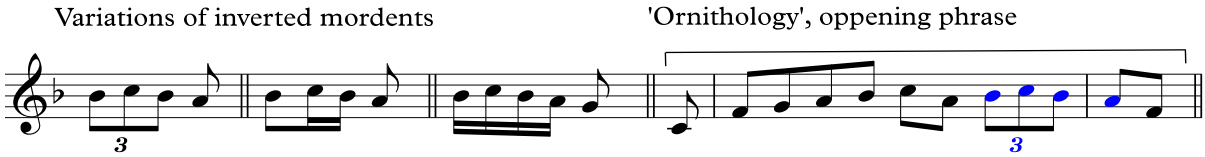
[94] Ibid., 28.

[95] The inverted mordent, the enclosure of a target note from one semitone above and one below (♭2 – 7 – 8 scale degrees), as well as the tritone substitutions were devices that bebop musicians adopted from earlier styles and were used already by Duke Ellington, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Charlie Christian and others. Ibid., 5-6.

[96] Milt Jackson Quintet *Opus De Jazz* (Savoy 4500, MG 12036, MG 12126), NYC, 28 October 1955.

'Ornithology', in a 1946 take (Example 4-6).[97] Owens also noted that Parker's early role model, Lester Young, made extensive use of the first mordent (in triplets), as indeed many improvisers do, and even played the more complex figure of 'Ornithology' in his solo 'Shoe Shine Boy'.[98]

Example 4-6. Examples of Charlie Parker's mordents (transcription by Owens)



A survey of Jackson's recordings during these formative years is impressive. Jackson reveals his familiarity with the stylistic devices and decorum of the time and not only on the vibraphone. In the months leading up to Jackson's recording 'Milt Meets Sid' and 'D and E', he had been regularly doubling in Gillespie's small groups at Birdland on both piano and vibraphone.[99] These takes became landmarks for the rapid ascendancy of the fledgling Modern Jazz Quartet, partly because they document the group's original line up with Ray Brown on bass and Kenny Clarke on drums. Several other recordings from the same period document developments in Jackson's piano playing, especially those early recordings with Gillespie in which the piano seat was occupied by Gillespie himself or Jackson. Jackson's piano work started to break free of the typical, two-finger emulation of mallets so common among vibraphone players, and Jackson started to demonstrate some accomplished chordal work. A collaboration with trumpeter Fats Navarro also finds Jackson playing the piano. In 'Double Talk', Jackson not only shows his abilities in comping behind Navarro's and Howard McGhee's solos, but also takes a solo himself (on the piano), demonstrating a range of musical devices that were characteristic of the time.[100]

'Things to Come' reveals much of Jackson's spirited improvisations, his instrument and performance settings. Although the recording quality is poor, we witness the virtuosity that the young vibist demonstrated and the musical circles he occupied in those formative

[97] Ibid., 31. The theme of 'Ornithology' is in a different key and the phrasing is not always in triplets but changes according to the individual player's preference. I follow Owens here and list the example as it appears in his text.

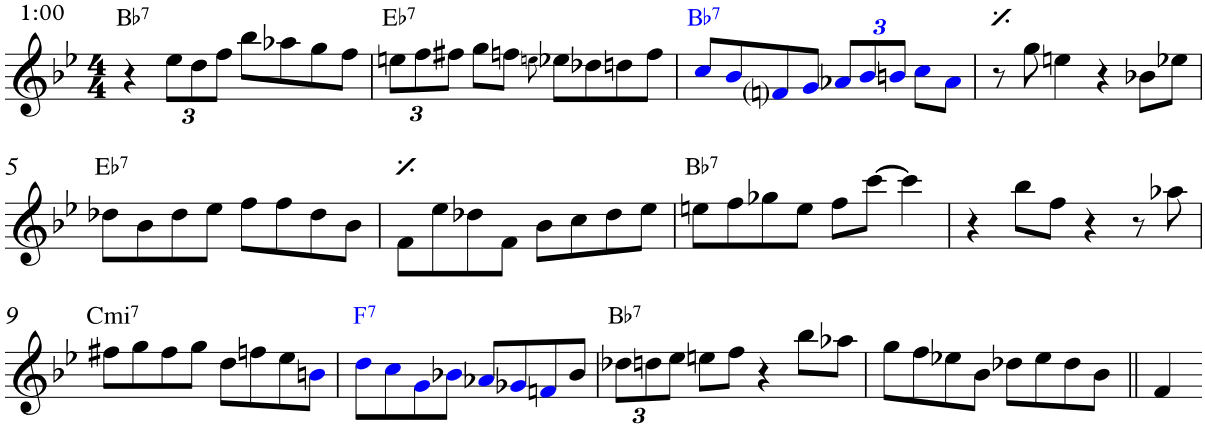
[98] Ibid.

[99] Milt Jackson, *The Quartette* (Savoy MG 12046), NYC, 24 August 1951. The album is also listed under the Dee Gee record label, owned by Dizzy Gillespie (DG 1002).

[100] Fats Navarro, *The Fabulous Fats Navarro, Vol. 1* (Blue Note BLP 1531). Apex Studios, NYC, October 11, 1948.

years.[101] One can also listen his solo on the same composition with Gillespie (*Groovin' High*) to get a clearer sense of how the vibist approached playing in such fast tempos.[102] The chromaticism which we encounter in 'Anthropology' is also evident in Jackson's solo in 'Emanon', from the same recording date with Gillespie (Example 4-7). Here Jackson demonstrates several stylistic traits. Oddly, the lack of mastery in the stylistic devices of the time forces the young vibist to be innovative on several occasions. Some of his devices are out of sync and not as refined as we encounter them in later years. In bars nine and ten, in the turnaround, there are suggestions of Jackson playing around the diminished and the ii-minor chord where he makes his improvised melody sound angular (a stylistic element of the time). He then approaches the root (F) of the V dominant of the blues with a three-note scalar motion suggestive of a tritone substitution (V of V).

Example 4-7. Jackson's solo, 'Emanon', mm. 1–12



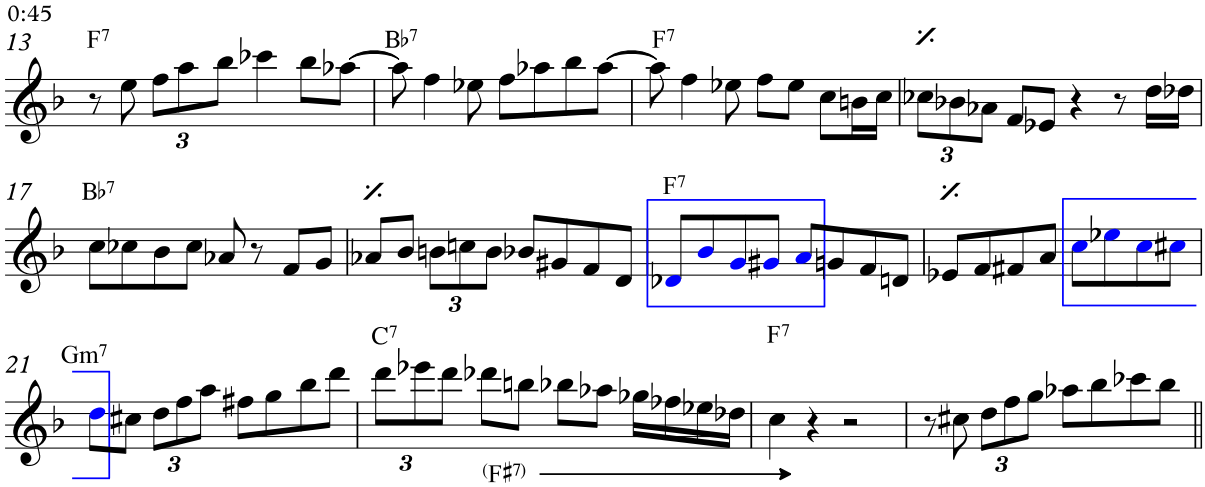
The 1-2 enclosure became an important ingredient of Jackson's melodic lines and is evident in many, if not most, of his solos. In the following example, the 1-2 enclosure is preceded by a leap that creates an agogic accent before resolving to the target note. Analysis of a sizeable corpus of Jackson's improvisations reveals several variations of this pattern. This can be broken down into two recognisable gestures. The first is the agogic accent which Jackson creates by pivoting from one chord tone to another (whether from a chord substitution or the original harmony). This is followed by the 1-2 enclosure which he performs from that point. Both are evident in Jackson's solo in the blues entitled 'Dr Jackle'

[101] Gillespie 'Things to Come', available online https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGjbNNk_9Qo (Accessed 30 August 2017).

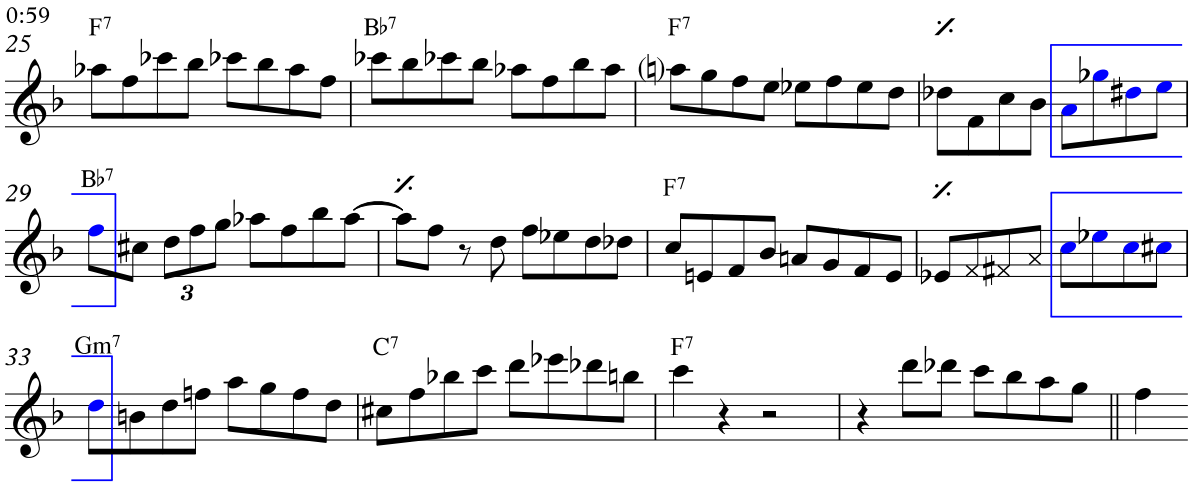
[102] Gillespie, 'Things to Come', *Groovin' High*, NYC, 9 July 1946.

(Example 4-8).[103] Jackson jumps from the Db to the Bb from which point he constructs a 1-2 enclosure. This is in fact the most frequent version of this device, to jump from one diminished chord tone to another. He uses the same generative procedure a bar ahead, but this time the jump is a minor third interval (from C to the Eb), to create, again, a 1-2 enclosure. In the third chorus of the same blues he performs this device twice, and this is identical with the second pattern, highlighted above (Example 4-9).

Example 4-8. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Dr Jackle', mm. 13–24
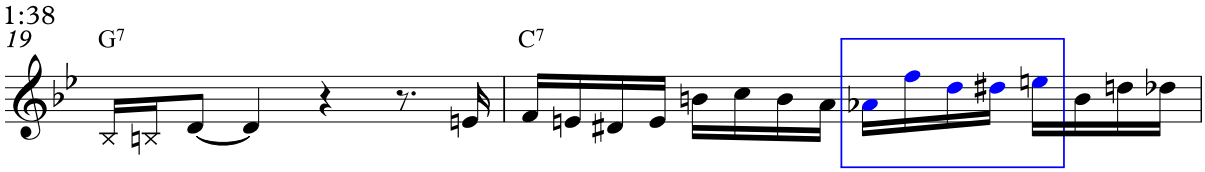


Example 4-9. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Dr Jackle', third chorus, mm. 25–37



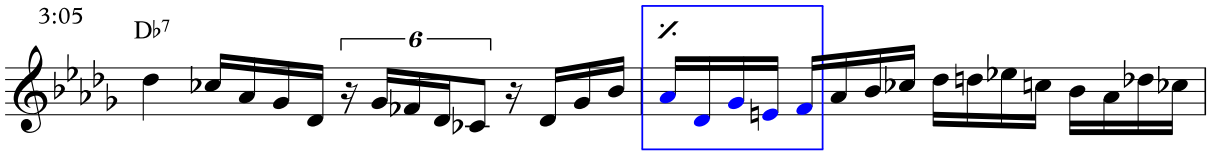
[103] Miles Davis And Milt Jackson Quintet/Sextet, Rudy Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, NJ, August 5, 1955.

Jackson performs the same device in his composition ‘Soulful’ (Example 4-10). In ‘S.K.J’, one can hear a variation of the pattern, in which Jackson approaches his target note from above and below. The leap is also reversed (Example 4-11).

Example 4-10. Excerpt, Jackson’s solo in ‘Soulful’, mm. 19–20



Example 4-11. Excerpt, Jackson’s solo, ‘S.K.J.’, mm. 3–4
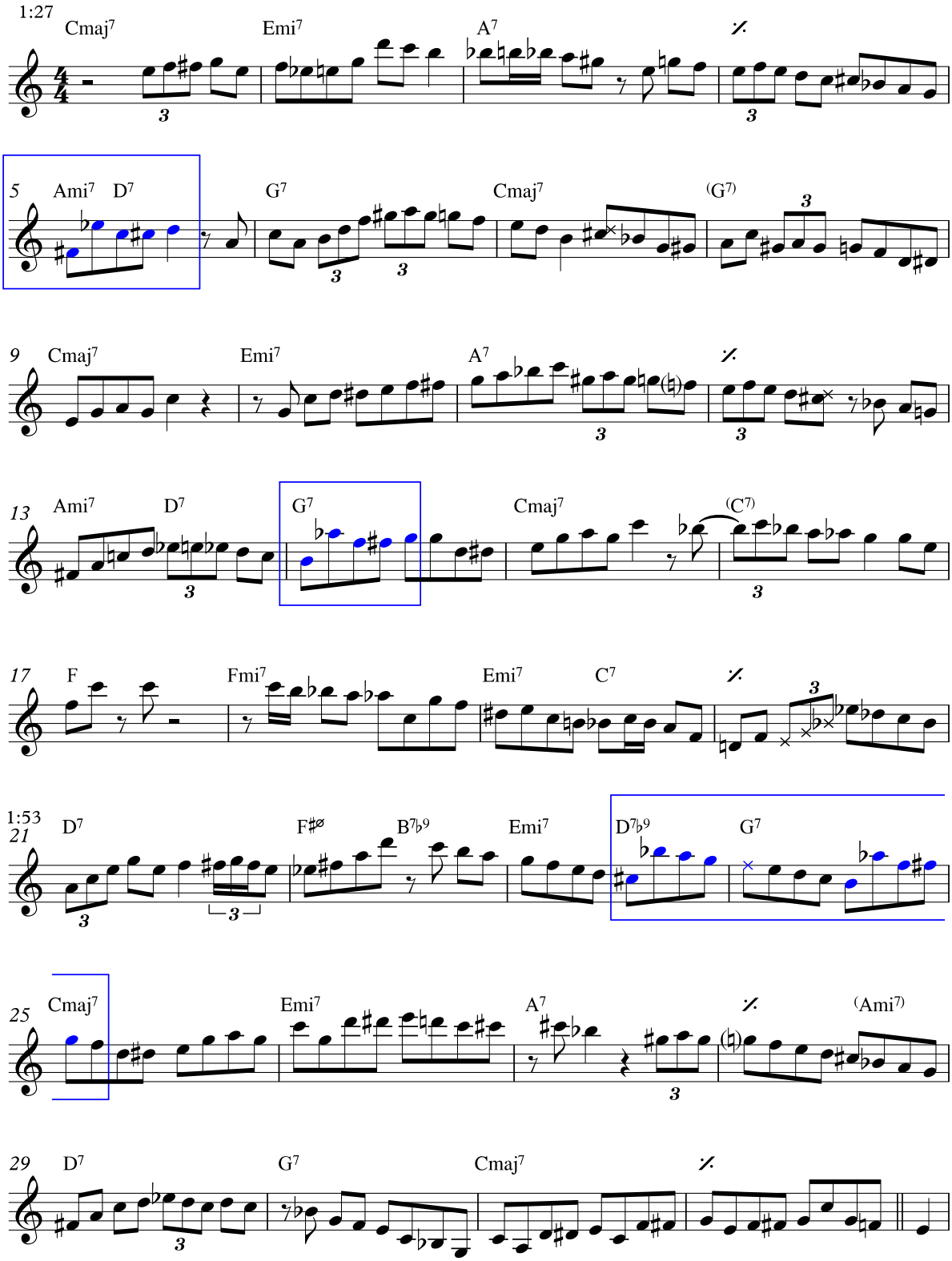


In this next example, ‘I Don’t Get Around Much Anymore’, Jackson performs the same device four times throughout the solo (Example 4-12). The song is part of Jackson’s first and only recording date as a leader for Blue Note, *Wizard of the Vibes*, and showcases the vibist leading an elite group of musicians.[104] The record also provides a contemporary document of several compositions by Jackson: ‘Tahiti’ and ‘Lillie’ and includes the first take of what was destined to become one of the most widely played blues of the era, ‘Bag’s Groove’. ‘One of the simplest but the most telling and well-known piece of music in jazz’, McPartland noted. ‘Everybody knows that piece’.[105] In ‘Bag’s Groove’ Jackson performs this device several times as well as variation. but at the landing point he plays a triplet to continue developing his line (Example 4-13).

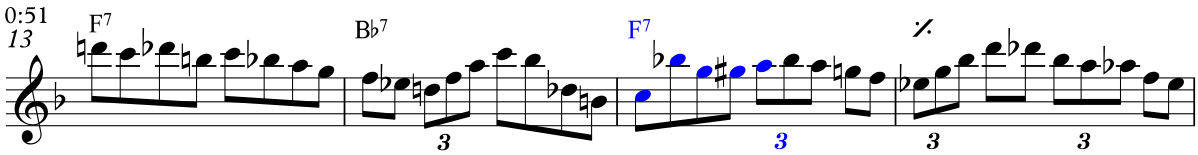
[104] Milt Jackson, *Wizard of the Vibes* (Blue Note LC 0133, 1952); recorded in sessions in 1948 and 1952. The musicians in question included Lou Donaldson, Kenny Clarke, John Lewis and Percy Heath.

[105] McPartland, ‘Milt Jackson on Piano Jazz’, (1991): http://www.npr.org/2013/01/07/168786059/milt-jackson-on-piano-jazz (accessed 25 August 2017).

Example 4-12. Jackson's solo, 'Don't Get Around Much Anymore'

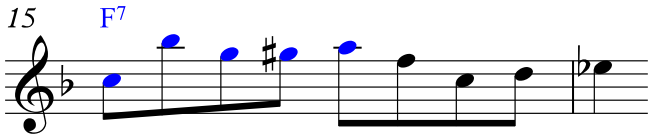


Example 4-13. Excerpt, 'Bag's Groove', mm. 13–16

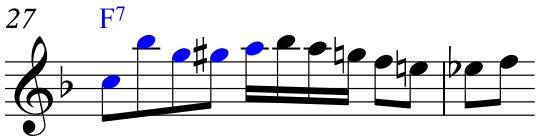


There are too many instances where the vibist or other improvising musicians played this device and it would be impossible to notate them all. I present a few more examples to demonstrated the occurrence of this device in Jackson's 1954 solo in 'Bag's Groove'.

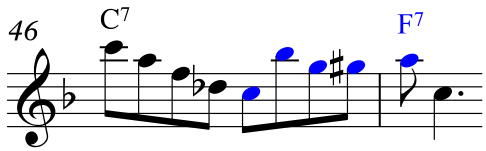
Example 4-14. Excerpt, 'Bag's Groove', 1954 take, m. 15



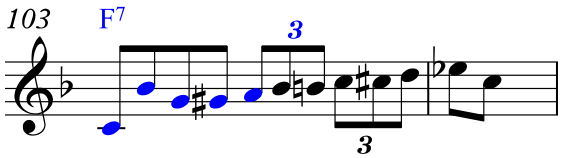
Example 4-15. Excerpt, 'Bag's Groove', 1954 take, m. 27



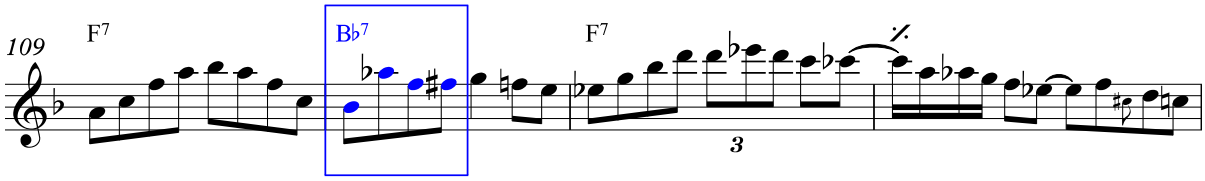
Example 4-16. Excerpt, 'Bag's Groove', 1954 take, m. 46



Example 4-17. Excerpt, 'Bag's Groove', 1954 take, m. 103

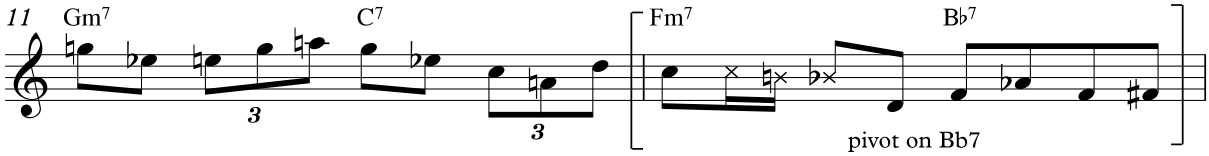


Example 4-18. Excerpt 'Bag's Groove', 1954 take, mm. 109–113
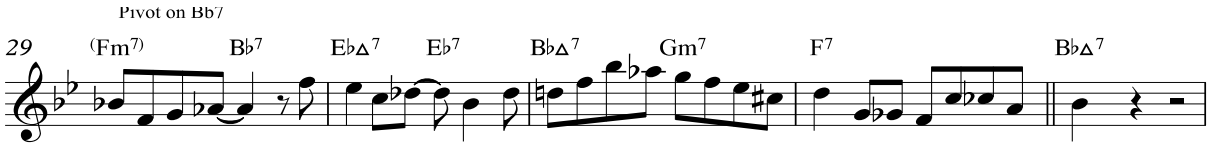


Another commonly used pattern is evident in Jackson's solo in 'Wonder Why', in which he pivots on the Bb chord to anticipate its seventh degree and follows this with a 1-2 enclosure (Example 4-19). This is also observable in bar 29 of 'Anthropology' (cited earlier and singled out below), in which Jackson pivots on a Bb dominant chord to anticipate the 7th degree of the dominant scale (Example 4-20).

Example 4-19. Excerpt, 'Wonder Why', mm. 9–11.
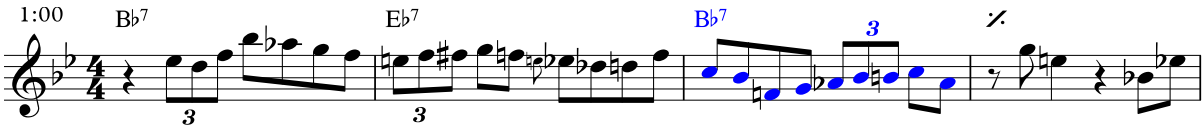


Example 4-20. Excerpt, 'Anthropology', mm. 29–32
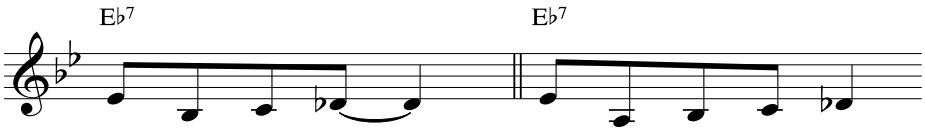


The most important feature here is not the exact articulation of the pattern (a jump from the root of the chord down to the 5th degree and a scale-wise motion to anticipate the 7th interval) but, rather, the intention to anticipate the 7th of the dominant chord. This is a device often encountered over a IV7 chord, as for example in bar five of a blues progression or over the IV7 chord in rhythm changes. Below I present another example of Jackson using the device, which is derived from an example I discussed earlier: 'Emanon' (Example 4-21). Jackson anticipates the seventh of the Bb7 chord, from which points he plays a triplet and continues his melodic line.

Example 4-21 Excerpt, 'Emanon', mm. 1-4



Owens lists the same device under Parker's motivic formulas and states that, in his survey of the saxophonist's music, the pattern appears approximately 230 times. A variation of this pattern is presented below (
Example 4-22).

Example 4-22 Pivoting on an Eb dominant chord (transcribed by Owens)



Pivoting on the dominant chord to anticipate its seventh degree was a device commonly used by bebop musicians and not one that I would choose to tie directly to a specific participant. These devices belonged to a network of stylistic traits and were regarded as common property. They were widespread and characterised an entire culture of musical thought. Some were not unique to bebop but distillations derived from earlier styles in jazz (enclosures for example were commonly used in earlier jazz styles too). To some degree, they demonstrate a collaboration between practitioners until strong structures form.

It was necessary for improvising musicians wishing to engage with the jazz scene to be familiar with a repertory of such sounds. Musical traits, patterns or formulas provided an aural medium of exchange among musicians and informed audiences that helped to foster a certain culture (much as the dress code and language did), in which the display of knowingness, taste, and discernment was a central feature.[106] The degree and type of this musical knowledge was fundamental to the way practitioners negotiated jazz styles and is

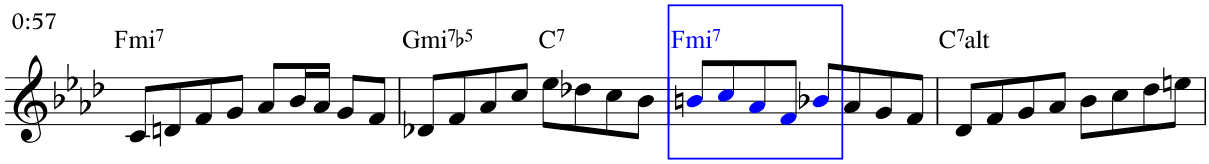
[106] There are of course distinctive types of visuality that can be easily pointed out and at different periods of this music's history. In the forties, for example, pioneer musical excursions were accompanied by an unconventional, for the time, specific 'surface' visual style. Langston Hughes's poem 'Flatted Fifths' summarises some of the visual elements and their significance in the jazz scene. The goatees, berets, suits, ties and body language that he described have all been parts of these 'surface' visual elements. In the jazz scene, the visual and aural styles were interwoven; their interaction in performance governed the broader cognitive and communicative dimension of jazz. For a detailed description of language and dress in jazz culture of the 1940s and 50s see: Heather K. Pinson, 'The Formation of the Jazz Image in Visual Culture', in *The Jazz Image: Seeing Music Through Herman Leonard's Photography*, ed. Heather K. Pinson (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010), 16-72.

evident in the form of replicated patterning in improvised solos. The frequency of these devices provides evidence for the social processes of experience and of the stylistic appropriateness of habitual responses of accomplished jazz musicians and of Jackson specifically. If, through these musical 'calls and responses', musicians are 'saying something'–to paraphrase Ingrid Monson: 'to those who share aural knowledge of the tradition' – we ought to identify what is being said and how.[107] My concern is to demonstrate one of the ways in which improvising musicians communicated cultural knowledge, identities and aesthetics through the articulation and manipulation of musical resources that signalled matters of cultural significance, to identify where this knowledge could have been situated within an improvisation and, ultimately, to situate improvisations against the matrix of jazz styles.

4.4 An Interpretation of Signs as Practical Activity

Jackson's undiminished commitment to bebop is evident in his recordings during the 1940s and 50s, which firmly position the expressive aspect of his musical outputs within the social web of black urban culture. In 'Tahiti', from Jackson's Blue Note record, *Wizard of the Vibes*, the vibist's solo is confined to quaver melodies and triplet turns that result in flowing and spacious, yet still promptly articulated lines. Although his sound is still percussive, it is evident that by that time his playing had already gained a greater sense of self-assurance and his phrasing had become suppler. At moments, he breaks away from the symmetrically formed melodies he played at earlier stages (such as on 'Anthropology'), and constructs phrases across the four- and eight-bar sections, completing irregularly shaped lines. In 'Tahiti', Parker's influence is once more prominent. Midway through the second A section Jackson plays a figure that was characteristic of Parker, which in this instance functions as a mediating gesture to connect two melodic points (Example 4-23, the pattern is prefigured and followed by a B♭).
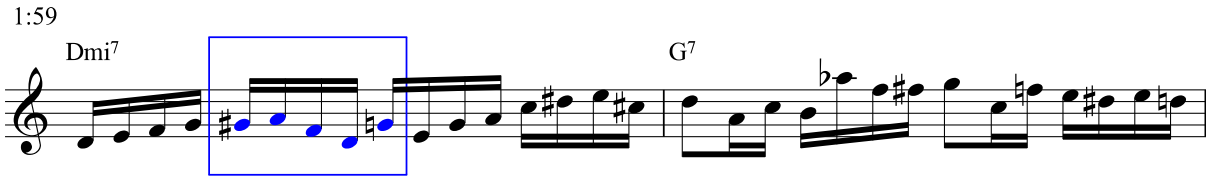
Example 4-23. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Tahiti', mm. 9–12



[107] Monson, 'Doubleness and Jazz Improvisation', 313.

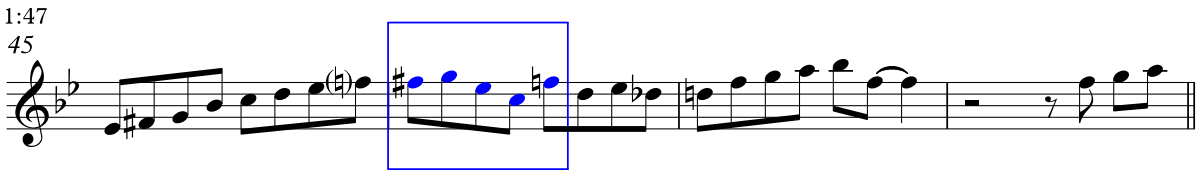
Patterns—the fundamental currency of intelligence for Hawkins—are tonally mobile.[108] The pattern which I have highlighted above also appears in 'Opus and Interlude' (from Jackson's 1955 album *Opus De Jazz*, which I have discussed earlier), but in a different tonal centre and in 'Opus de Funk', from the same record (Example 4-24).[109]

Example 4-24. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Opus and Interlude'



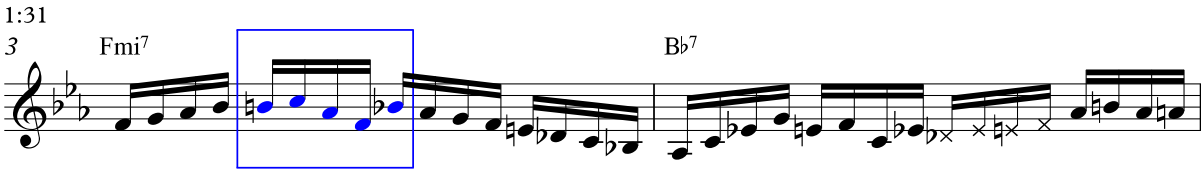
Jackson played the above pattern on several occasions. It can be heard on a blues entitled 'Stonewall', from his 1955 album *Milt Jackson Quartet/Soul Pioneers* (Example-4-25).[110]

Example-4-25. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Stonewall', mm. 45–48



It can also be heard in 'They can't take that away from me', from his record *Meet Milt Jackson* (Example-4-26).[111]

Example-4-26. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'They can't take that away from me', mm. 3–4



Owens lists two of Parker's variations of the same pattern (Example 4-27) and noted that they occur approximately one hundred times in Parker's improvisations.[112]
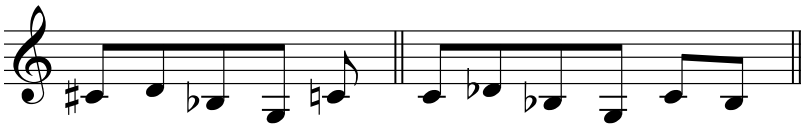
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[108] Jeff Hawkins, *On Intelligence* (New York: Times Books, 2004).

[109] Milt Jackson Quintet (Savoy 4500, MG 12036, MG 12125).

[110] Milt Jackson Quartet (Prestige 45-102, PRLP 7003, PR 7655, PR 24048), also released as *Soul Pioneers* (PRLP 7224), Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, NJ 20 May 1955.
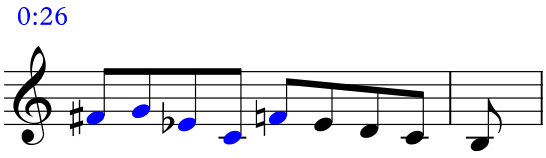
[111] Milt Jackson Quintet/*Meet Milt Jackson* (Savoy MG 12061, SJL 2204). NYC, January 23, 1956.

Example 4-27. Two of Charlie Parker's patterns (transcription by Owens)



One representative example is presented below and is derived from Parker's improvisation on 'Koko' (Savoy label). This solo was widely learned and imitated by other players (Example 4-28).[113]

Example 4-28. Charlie Parker on 'Koko'



These expressive nuances reflect both spontaneous and calculated choices. But there is no reason to suppose that the patterns identified were memorised and fitted together, as Eugene Smith noted in his study of Bill Evans' compositions, or as Milman Parry and Albert Lord observed in their landmark study on the oral tradition of South Slavic epic singing.[114] Lord and Parry proposed that by drawing on a knowledge base of formulas and on a system for their variation within the constraints of their tradition, singers crafted tales of great length spontaneously. The patterns which I have hitherto identified are easily modified and used in various scenarios. Patterns can also have a life of their own, becoming displaced from the original context intended for them. For example, below I highlight a few variations of the above pattern: the first Jackson played in his 1955 recording with Miles Davis cited earlier, 'Dr Jackle' (Example 4-29); the second in a 1948 collaboration with Howard McGhee, on a blues entitled 'Down Home Blues' (Example 4-30).[115] The third variation is from Jackson's solo in 'Opus de Funk' (Example 4-31).

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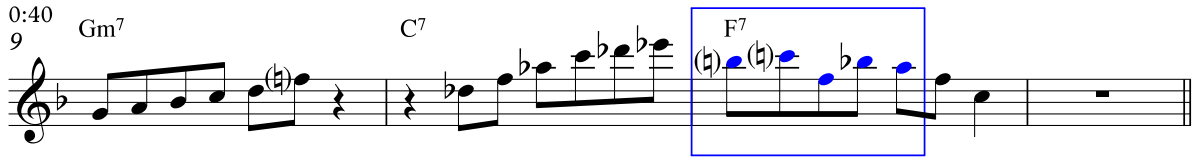
[112] Owens, 'Charlie Parker', 5.

[113] Parker, *Rebeboppers* / *The Be Bop Boys*, NYC, November 26, 1945.

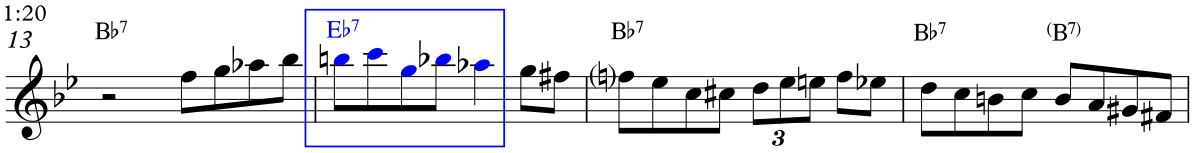
[114] Gregory Eugene Smith, 'Homer, Gregory and Bill Evans? The Theory of Formulaic Composition in the Context of the Jazz Piano', (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1983), 206-08. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*.

[115] Howard McGhee - Milt Jackson Sextet (Savoy MG 12026, SJL 2219). Chicago, IL, February 1948.

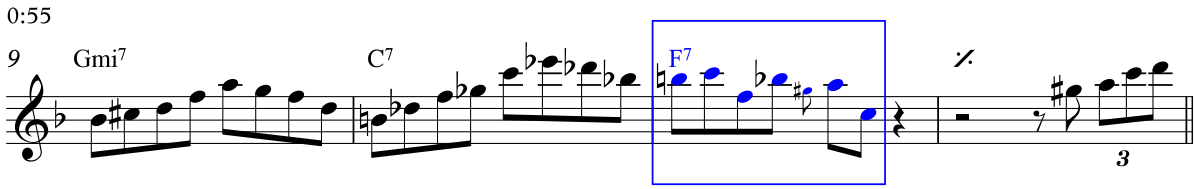
Example 4-29. Excerpt, Jackson solo, 'Dr Jackle', mm. 9–12



Example 4-30. Excerpt, Jackson solo, 'Down Home Blues', mm. 13–16



Example 4-31. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Opus de Funk', mm. 9–12



Jackson's recordings show that following his embrace of the novel jazz style of the time, bebop constituted his compositional voice and performance rhetoric. But to speak of composition and performance practice as if they were two entirely different things is misleading. In jazz, composing and performing often occur simultaneously and represent theoretical points on a continuum, as Ramsey noted.[116] This point has also been laboured by Gillespie:

> The jazz musician, though he practically never receives credit for it, is constantly composing during his improvisations, and most of the melodies he creates are never set down on paper, nor on record […] If they had those midget tape records on the market back in 1942, I could've written a song a week without taking off time from what I believe is the essence of jazz composition, playing and improvisations.[117]

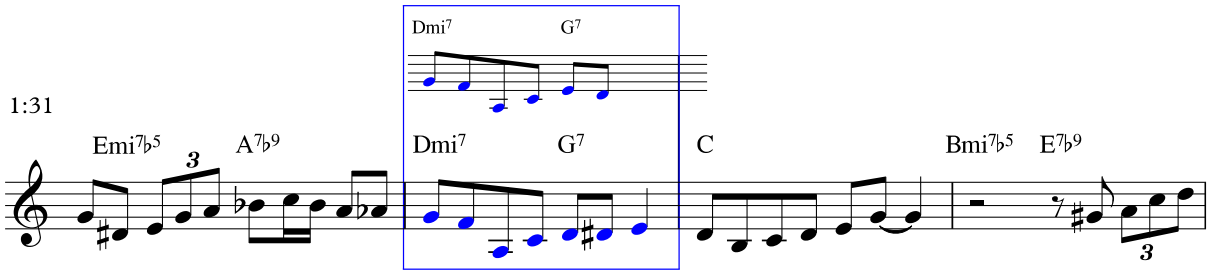
In real-time improvisation, compositional structures and performance events shifted between fixed and unfixed components; the dichotomy is by and large an emphasis on the process. On another level, this problematic also highlights the interaction between fixed and non-fixed aspects of jazz performance and composition. For example, in the same way that Jackson is

[116] Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 136.

[117] Dizzy Gillespie and Al Frazer, *To Be or Not to Bop* (London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 170.

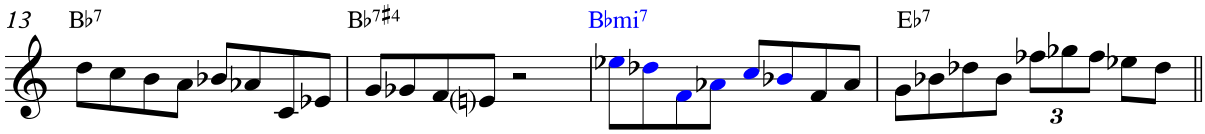
presented in the previous example as using a device attributed to Parker, musicians derived patterns from bebop themes, like the longer structure in the previous section from the tune 'Ornithology' (Example 4-6) which Owens cited Parker and Young for using. In bar 14 of his solo on 'Wonder Why' Jackson plays a pattern that is a variation of a well-known pattern in bebop and which can be heard in the theme of 'Donna Lee' (Example 4-32; I have transposed the line here for comparison).

Example 4-32. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Wonder Why', mm. 13–16



Composed by Parker, 'Donna Lee' is one of the most characteristic compositions in the idiom and its various components are still widely studied and imitated (Example 4-33).

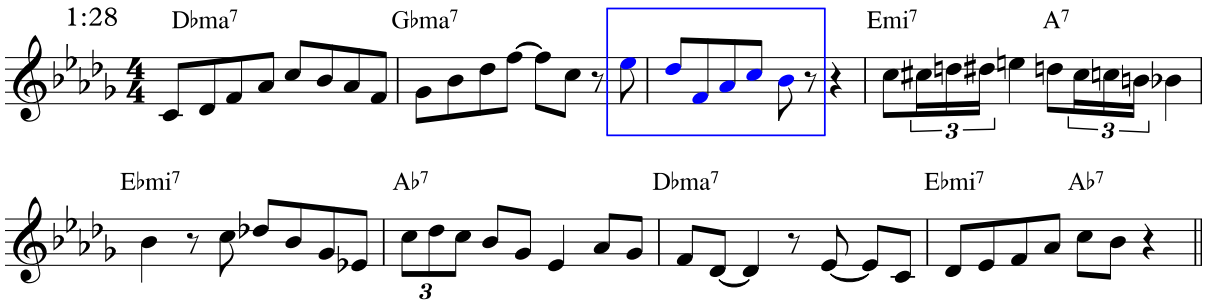
Example 4-33. Charlie Parker's 'Donna Lee', mm. 13–16



This pattern was not used by Parker and Jackson alone, but by other musicians as well. In one of the earliest recording which I have studied by Jackson (with trumpeter Howard McGhee, recorded in 1948), saxophonist Jimmy Heath played the same pattern a few bars before the young Jackson's solo, demonstrating how a body of compositional devices were listened to and interpreted (Example 4-34).[118]
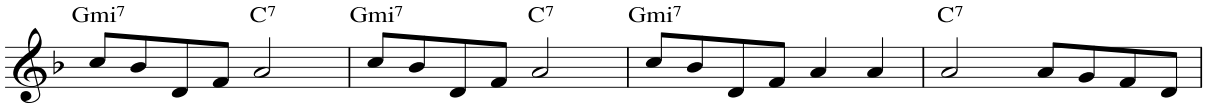
[118] *The Howard McGhee Sextet With Milt Jackson* (Savoy MG 12026). The song 'Bass C Jam' was originally entitled 'Byas a Drink' and recorded by Don Byas for Savoy records. The chord structure of the song itself is also a variation of the song 'Stompin' at the Savoy'.

Example 4-34 Excerpt, Jimmy Heath's solo, 'Bass C Jam'



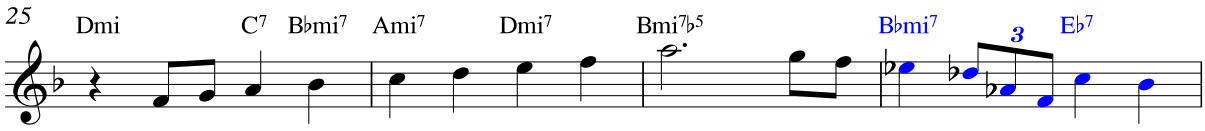
This pattern was also repeated three times to form the melody of one of the most celebrated songs in the jazz repertoire, 'Honeysuckle Rose', composed in 1929 by Fats Waller (Example 4-35). Starting from the fourth scale degree of the minor seventh chord, or the root of the corresponding dominant 7th chord, the pattern moves down diatonically to form an inverted major 7th chord from that point, or a dominant 13th, from the starting note (Bb major 7th below, or C 13th).

Example 4-35 Fat Waller's 'Honeysuckle Rose', mm. 1-4.



Perhaps also a direct influence of Parker or Waller, trombonist J. J. Johnson's composition 'Lament' also includes a variation of this pattern in its melody (Example 4-36)

Example 4-36. J. J. Johnson's 'Lament', mm. 25-28



We may only become fully aware of the nature of such devices through a situated and context-sensitive analysis of their usage. In fact, to explore some of the meanings that these code-fusions may have generated, it helps to situate these patterns more firmly in their historical moment. Not only, in practical terms, did such formations become ingrained in the musical language of jazz musicians, but they also constituted part of the larger aesthetics of bebop. Hollerbach points out that in his ethnography in the New York jazz scene, his subject

LC insists that he 'listens to the catchy, communicable elements in someone's playing'. Hollerbach notes that, 'the social, dialogical facts of jazz performativity become apparent, that is, as Nicholas Gebhardt writes, "the jazz act, prior to any process of individual self-expression, is already a social act"'.[119] These patterns became culturally weighted because they had been repeated over time. When we consider such cultural frames to read the repeated existence of these devices, their use and density in the music takes on a decidedly different tone. They were ways to connect to knowing audiences and build community, whilst performing them became a point of identification. The more identifications made within a performance event, the more communities were built. The paradox lies in that they can also be read as celebrating a specific type of conservative performance stemming from a conception of what constituted 'modern'. Many authors have identified this formula in bebop, noting among others that the practice of recycling old material into new pieces is observable in other realms of African American music making.[120]

There are more reasons for understanding such devices. Stylistic understanding, which links a performance not only with others of its kind but also to a historical period, was an important aspect of the music. It could be argued that stylistic reference has never absent in jazz. The intertextuality of stylistic reference is inevitable and an avoidance of concern with what might be authentic modes of jazz performance does not yield a rendition of 'jazz in the tradition' as a historically neutral pattern of structured events. Jackson may be heard in the light of a preference to the music of Parker, but his music was no less situated within an amalgam of musical preferences, compiled of music of varied provenance. To hear his music as a pure construct of bebop would only be within the influence of the dominant aesthetic tradition which I discussed in the previous section, in carrying the role of abstraction and as being available for appreciation quite apart from the contingencies of his performances and the influence of a range of adjutant, culturally embedded, signs. One who sits comfortably within this aesthetic tradition may hear a performance without realising the interpretive frame, or becoming aware of the expressive and rhetorical gestures of jazz as implicit in Jackson's improvisations. Rather, I adopt a more dynamic view of these embedded musical signs which I also explore in the blues and gospel music in further chapters.

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[119] Hollerbach, '(Re)voicing Tradition', 161.

[120] For instance, by analogy to text substitution in medieval music James Patrick terms practice of borrowing (recycling) chord progressions in bebop 'contrafact'. James Patrick 'Charlie Parker and Harmonic Sources of Bebop Composition: Thoughts on the Repertory of New Jazz in the 1940s', *Journal of Jazz Studies* 2 (June 1975): 3. For further discussion see Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 131, and Justin A. Williams, 'Musical Borrowing in Hip-Hop Music: Theoretical Frameworks and Case Studies', (PhD diss., University of Nottingham, 2009).

Controlling the formation of these patterns as vehicles for signification does not guarantee the precise response they will trigger from their audience. Nevertheless, the signals of cultural significance heard in those patterns are heard according to a learned code of recognition. I trust, therefore, that the employment of such devices can be used as an instrument for measuring the positioning of an individual within a social or musical network or, in this scenario, evaluating Jackson's understanding of and relationship with the style under consideration. Musicians express allegiances with their bodies and through their craft; if one respects the structure of avant-garde jazz society in the 1940s, I argue that these musical traits, which are often referred to as 'the language' or 'the jazz vocabulary', offer a very particular view of the complex cultural web in which these fragmented musical details are embedded.[121] In many ways, the frequency with which these devices occur in jazz solos demonstrates a certain coordination, an agreement, if you will, among individuals about what those elements that defined the musical style of the time. With respect to Hennion's proposal of the intimate mediation between music lover and musical sound in the co-production of taste, style is mutually transformative and cultivated through a range of practices, bodies, spaces, durations.[122] All point to the formation of jazz styles as a collective accomplishment.

4.5 Patterns in Bebop: Metaphors by Which the Music Lives

Let's not call it bebop, let's call it music[123]

Charlie Parker

[121] James Dean's understanding that 'the term vocabulary is often used by improvisers as a way of referring to the stock of ideas used when improvising' is limiting. Dean's explanation is closer to what is often referred to as formulas, which again seems to be an imprecise term. Dean notes that although a musical vocabulary may include standard devices such as scales and arpeggios, a player might be recognized by the individual way in which such a vocabulary is individually applied and by the range of the vocabulary that is used. Again, Dean's explanation here leans more towards an understanding of the sonic signature of a player rather than what is referred to 'the jazz vocabulary' among musicians. James Dean, 'Pat Metheny's Finger Routes: The Role of Muscle Memory in Guitar Improvisation', *Jazz Perspectives* 8, no. 1 (2014 Oct 16), 45. For more information on the 'jazz vocabulary' see Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, 119. A series of videos (available on YouTube) in which accomplished jazz artists are interviewed is instructive for an understanding of terms such as 'vocabulary' and 'the jazz language' in jazz. For example, see Mulgrew Miller 'Improvisation Can be Taught', available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyRGB_x7VSg (accessed on January 22, 2017). For a consideration of theoretical perspectives on language (speaking) and improvisation see Berkowitz, *The Improvising Mind*, 146-49.

[122] Born, 'Music and the Materialisation of Identities', 378.

[123] Quoted in Owens, *Bebop*, 5.

> *The music wasn't called bop at Minton's. In fact, we had no name for the music. We called ourselves modern.*[124]
>
> Kenny Clarke, *Hear Me Talkin' to Ya*

In *Stomping the Blues*, Albert Murray links bebop to the Kansas City music scene and Charlie Parker:

> Whatever they play becomes good-time music because they always maintain the velocity of celebration [...] What you hear when you listen to Charlie Parker [...] is not a theorist dead set on turning dance music into concert music. What you hear is a brilliant protégé of Buster Smith and admirer of Lester Young adding a new dimension of elegance to the Kansas City drive, which is to say the velocity of celebration.[125]

The influence of Lester 'Prez' Young and alto saxophonist Henry 'Buster' (or 'Prof') Smith on Parker is a story that has often been told. Murray identifies a certain sound of Young, in the blues-oriented city of Kansas, passed on to Parker, who was employed by Smith. This is a familiar trope: of 'passing on' (whose richness in substance is of course more complicated than this description); of music becoming transhistorical; of a cultural transaction during which the performing body functions as the vessel of operation. As Samuel Floyd asserts:

> Works of music are not just objects, but cultural transactions between human beings and organized sound – transactions that take place in specific idiomatic cultural contexts that are fraught with the values of the original contexts from which they spring, that require some translation by auditors in pursuit of the understanding and aesthetic substance they offer.[126]

As such, a cultural transaction (in this study, an improvisation) needs to be specified at its level of operation. Where does it come from, how is it established, how does it come to act, what does it carry in its very fabric? Following this line of argument, we need to follow actors in process and comprehend the tangible qualities of their product. I labour this point for what is a quite simple reason. Guided by motives that take me back to my introduction I put forward the following suggestion: I trust in avenues of a study of jazz in terms of concrete moves in forms of improvisation; one that would be of assistance to articulate the transaction of oral history in jazz. How does Jackson's playing relate to that of others, to Parker's solo on 'Oh Lady Be Good' and again through Parker to that of others? How can we best identify and articulate this information? I am hovering on the edge of large issues here, issues that need to

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[124] Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff, *Hear Me Talkin' to Ya* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966), 350.

[125] Albert Murray, *Stomping the Blues* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1989), 164-65.

[126] Samuel Floyd, 'Ring Shout! Literary Studies, Historical Studies and Black Music Inquiry', *Black Music Research Journal* 11, no. 2 (1991), 278.

be addressed in greater force and detail. It is fitting to return to my overarching theme and elaborate further on how the above considerations can inform our reading of Jackson's music.

The affinity between Parker's and Jackson's pairing of tones hints at a significant relationship; one that penetrates jazz at all levels. In jazz, patterns are metaphorical: they represent both the ordinary and the extraordinary language. They are composites of a real language in which they function as creative tools, as much as they are devices that stir imagination and rhetorical flair. A pattern, for example, may represent a temporal musical gesture, but can also evoke a distant musical event. In the previous examples the highlighted patterns are personified metaphors because practitioners (or knowing listeners) see something nonhuman as human. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson explain that personification belongs to a broader category that includes a variety of metaphors, allowing practitioners to make sense of events in human terms and to translate the musical language.[127] Citing Johnson, McClary explains that metaphors are 'fundamental means through which we as embodied beings orient ourselves with respect to the world and thereby structure our discourses and our cognition'.[128] Metaphor involves using correlations between domains to construct meaning. This sort of intra-musical analogy which I describe between Jackson's and Parker's improvisations is based on similarities between the constituent elements of musical passages or patterns. In this scenario, these are tied to a specific improvising musician and the analogy is directional. Lawrence Zbikowski is among many scholars who have argued that analogical reasoning and metaphor are broadly connected with cross-modal correspondences and which are broadly demonstrated in human cognition.[129] In the opening scenario of the previous section (Example 4-23) the pattern refers directly to something that Parker did and, aside from its usage as a stylistic device, in such occasions Jackson is, consciously or not, expressing his allegiance to both the saxophonist and the idiom. The pattern is, therefore, both subordinate and superordinate to the improvised melody: subordinate because it is part of a large structure, but superordinate because, as an important feature of the phrase, it evokes something bigger than that moment in the solo.[130]

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[127] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago and London, 2003 (1980)), 23, 32-33.

[128] Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 23.

[129] Lawrence M. Zbikowski, 'Music, Analogy, and Metaphor'. In *The Routledge Companion To Music Cognition*, edited by Richard Ashely and Renee Timmers (New York and London: Routledge, 2017), 501-512.

[130] There are important distinctions between metaphorical language and irony and as identified in the work of African American musicians. Irony is metaphorical but all metaphors are not necessarily ironic. The topic of irony in African American studies is a very old one. For more information on irony see Lawrence W. Levine,

Metaphor is an important way of structuring thought and communicating the elements that define a musical style. When we understand a target domain such as pitch relationships, we also understand, or at least attribute to it, something more about its source domain. A characteristic of my understanding here is that it is semiotic: it starts with the terms used in the musical community to describe music as signifying, considering the understanding involved in kinaesthetic activity, as well as the more abstract process of pattern recognition. But what do these examples tell us about the jazz tradition? It seems that, rather than concealing stylistic debt to Parker, Jackson is rather emphasising his knowledge of, and admiration for Parker's music. 'Charlie Parker's music was freedom to my way of thinking, because that took him from one structure to another. The music they call freedom now is quite different', Jackson stated.[131] My understanding of freedom in Jackson's formulation is that it defines musical creativity whereby individual expression is encouraged within a specific context of collective interaction and stylistic constraints.[132] These constraints, contrary to what is often understood by public opinion, played a crucial role not only in the act of improvising but also in order for an improvisation to be understood as being within one style. As such, it was imperative for Jackson to draw on the musical material and processes defined by the musical culture of which it was part. His choices may have been many, but they were not unconstrained.

Still, questions inevitably arise: at what point does influence and imitation end to prevent a musical idea from being a mere act of copying? How do individuals, as did Jackson, deal with this influence and how does this influence become meaningful to the audience and the idiom? Tracing artistic influence is of course common practice, if often necessarily speculative in nature, not only in musical analysis but in the broader humanities too. By way of example, literary critic Harold Bloom returned to the issue in *The Anxiety of Influence*, in which he described the process as one in which poets must struggle to overcome the influence of their precursors to form their own 'voice'. He maintained:

Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom (New York: 1977), 298-366. Henry Louis Gates, *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 103-07.

[131] Danson, 'Milt Jackson', 5.

[132] For a review of a wide range of definitions of improvisation and stylistic constraints see: Bruno Nettl, 'Introduction: An Art Neglected in Scholarship', in *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, ed. Bruno Nettl, and Melinda Russell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Bruno Nettl, 'Thoughts on Improvisation: A Comparative Approach', *The Musical Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (January 1974); Carl Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte, Op. 200* (New York Longman: Longman, 1983 (1836)).

> Poetic influence–when it involves two strong, authentic poets,–always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation. The history of fruitful poetic influence, which is to say the main tradition of Western poetry since the Renaissance, is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, wilful revisionism without which modern poetry as such could not exist.[133]

It is also important to examine whether these musical outputs were motivated or influenced by African American cultural memory with its mythological and interpretive values. How do such instances validate the influence of values, transformations and contributions of black musicians in American culture? We see in Jackson's music how his solos are celebrations of earlier musical moments—his or by others—and metaphorical renditions of pre-existing musical material. Earlier than Bloom, and in a very similar spirit, Ralph Ellison noted that the oral/aural transmission of jazz created a circumstance which made it impossible for practising musicians to develop a voice devoid of prior voices.[134] I cite Ellison partly because his work was highly influential in the African American community. Ellison's writing can be linked in no uncertain terms to that of literary critic Henry Louis Gates, who is particularly celebrated in jazz studies, and whose theory has been deemed indispensable for inquiry into black music scholarship broadly. The inspiration of Gates' hermeneutics, more fully articulated in his book *The Signifying Monkey*, is Esu-Elegbara, the mythical African figure, 'the interpreter of culture', 'the guardian of the crossroads', 'the master of style', and the connector of 'the grammar of divination with its rhetorical structures'. One of his African American descendants, the Signifyin(g) monkey, held the keys to the interpretation of black vernacular culture.[135]

Gates' theory rests on the concept of signification: not in the standard English sense of denotation or reference, but in its 'black English' sense (as Murphy puts it) of verbal figuration or repetition with a difference.[136] Gates refers to a mode of vernacular discourse long acknowledge by African American sociologists and linguists in which multiple semantic relationships emerge through the playful deployment of seemingly unrelated terms. He explains:

> Signifyin(g) is black double-voicedness; because it always entails formal revision and an intertextual relation […] I find it an ideal metaphor for black literary

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[133] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 30.

[134] Ellison, *Shadow and Act*.

[135] Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, 56.

[136] Murphy, 'Jazz Improvisation', 8.

> criticism, for the formal manner in which texts seem concerned to address their antecedents. Repetition, with a signal difference, is fundamental to the nature of Signifyin(g), as we shall see.[137]

Gates was attentive to the context and process of both literary creation and musical performance: his criteria drew on African American expressive culture and his inspiration was both musical and literary. He derived his theory from observations of black-language use and from close readings of the black literary tradition. These were enhanced with data from the corpus of myths and texts dealing with Esu-Elegbara, the trickster figure in West Africa and his New World descendant, the Signifying Monkey as well as forms of black music, especially jazz. Gates cites numerous examples of Signifyin(g) in black vernacular culture, as in the work, for example, of Ellison. He defined Signifyin(g) as a mode of language that shifts the focus from its literal meaning to its figurative import; from the sense to the sound of the words themselves; from the linear to the associative aspect of the language. Murphy notes that since Roman Jacobson called attention to it, this has been recognised as a characteristic of much poetic language. Jacobson pointed out that poetic language is distinguished from everyday language by its 'focus on the message for its own sake'.[138]

As Murphy notes 'what makes Gates' Signifyin(g) theory unique is the particular combination of the subject matter, the often competitive nature of the process, and the cultural and historical rootedness of this type of language use for African Americans'.[139] He points out that creativity in such a language environment is not based on a concept of complete originality but rather on repetition and variation, where meaning depends equally on the transformation of existing material and on originality. Gates notes that one can Signify with respect and admiration (Gates even tells us that his notion of Signifyin(g) is Signifyin(g) on Jacques Derrida's neologism *Différance*).[140] He speaks of 'black musicians who perform each other's standards on a joint album, not to critique these but to engage in refiguration as an act of homage'.[141] According to Gates (and Derrida), then, improvising musicians are always quoting someone else and this quotation necessarily preserves a connection with the

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[137] Gates spelled Signifyin(g) with a capital S and a parenthesised g to distinguish it from the standard English usage. Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, 51.

[138] Roman Jacobson, 'Linguistics and Poetics', in *Style in Language*, ed. Thomas Sebeok (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1960). Quoted in Murphy, 'Jazz Improvisation', 9.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Différance is a term coined to describe the difference and deferral of meaning. The term first appeared in Derrida's paper 'Cogito et histoire de la folie' and eventually was elaborated in various contexts, as in his essay 'Différance'. Jacques Derrida, 'Cogito and the History of Madness', in *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978).

[141] Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, xxvi-xxvii.

past, to that which is being cited. Consequently, the identity of the improvising musicians is always in flux, or as Ellison (whom I quoted more fully above) argued, it is impossible to build a voice devoid of prior voices, necessarily forming therefore a concept of tradition.

Gates' theory forms the primary analytical lens in Floyd's *The Power of Black Music*, in which the author proposes that jazz improvisations are 'toasts', metaphoric renditions of the Signifyin(g) strategies, linking therefore jazz improvisation with African cultural memory:

> African survivals exist not merely in the sense that African-American music has the same characteristics as its African counterparts, but also that the musical *tendencies*, the mythological beliefs, assumptions, and the interpretive strategies of African Americans are the same as those that underlie the music of the African homeland, that these tendencies and beliefs continue to exist as African cultural memory, and that they continue to inform the continuity and elaboration of African-American music.[142]

Floyd proposes that Signifyin(g) strategies include the transformation of pre-existing musical material by trifling with it, teasing it, or censuring it, explaining that Signifyin(g) is the rhetorical use of pre-existing material as a means of demonstrating respect for a musical style (or poking fun at it), as well as the use of other troping mechanisms such as pastiche, tone play and the illusion of speech or narration.[143]

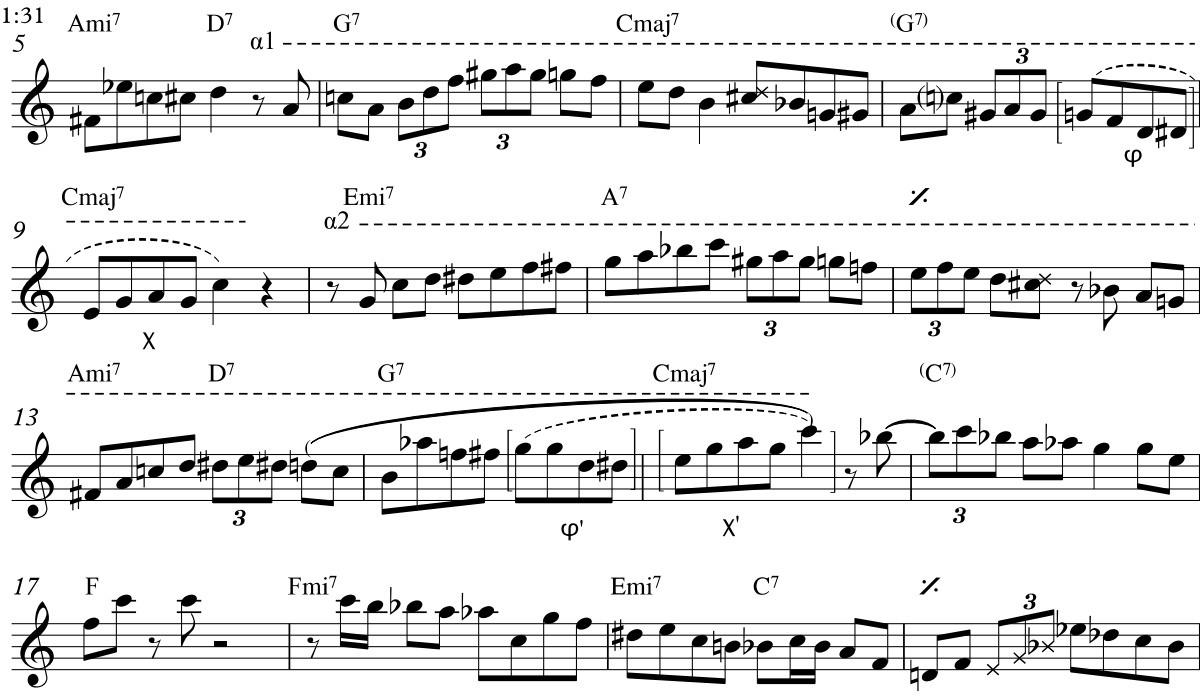
Both repetition and variation (or, repetition with a difference) as acts of homage are common elements in Jackson's improvisations, as evident in the replication of well-known stylistic devices in his music. It is also important to consider, however, another way the vibist includes repetition and variation in his solos. Although he rarely repeats himself exactly, as was the case with several improvisers he occasionally resorts to figures with similar melodic shapes. These, however, most often occur within the context of the same piece, recording, or in recordings which were made in close proximity to each other, rather than in disparate harmonic scenarios (as a number of scholars have argued for different improvisers in jazz). On *Wizard of the Vibes*, in bar nine of 'Don't Get Around Much Anymore' (Example 4-37), the vibist plays a five-note melodic shape (here named χ), which he repeats exactly (but transposed an octave higher) a few bars later (χ'). Interestingly, two consecutive asymmetrical melodic segments (α1 and α2) conclude with that same shape (bars 6–9 and 10–15). This shape reappears in bar 25 (Example 4-38), although, as if aware of the repetition and trying to avoid it, Jackson does not rest his line in χ' but takes it in an unexpected direction. The shape

[142] Floyd, *The Power of Black Music*, 5.

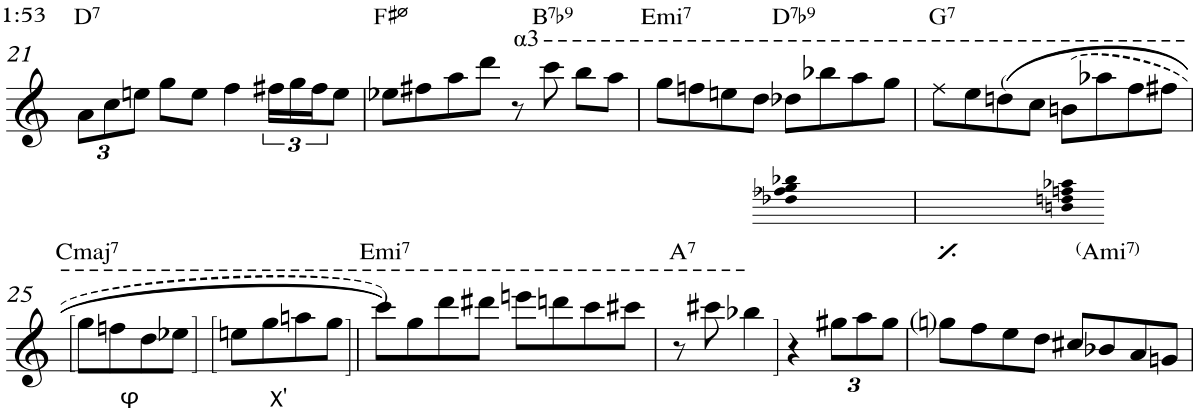
[143] Ibid., 6-7.

φ that leads to χ is identical in α1 and α3, whilst in α2 the idea remains the same but the approach alters slightly. (I have separated χ from its preceding four-note shape φ to identify χ as being stronger as a melodic line, easily recognized without that which precedes it.) Once more, a reference to the recording is necessary to grasp the tentative feeling of Jackson and his sudden change of direction.

Example 4-37. Excerpt, 'Don't Get Around Much Anymore', mm. 5–20.



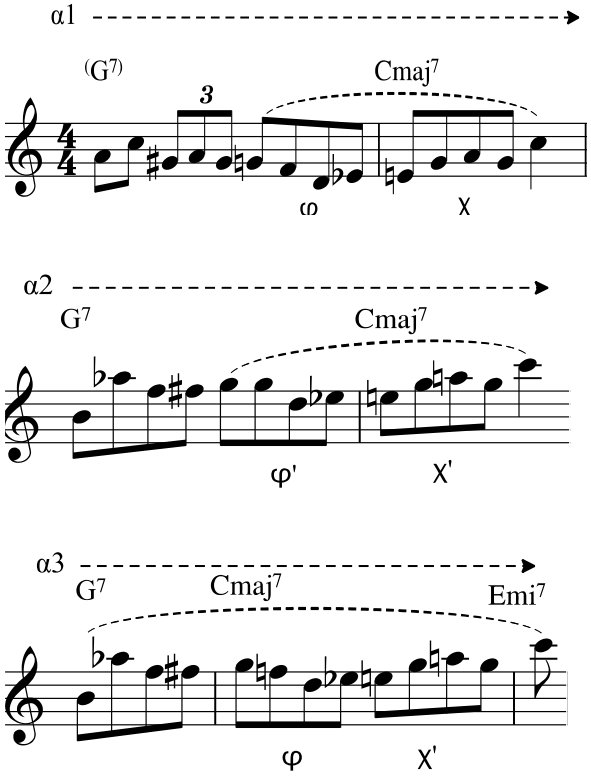
Example 4-38. Excerpt, 'Don't Get Around Much Anymore', mm. 21–28.



Furthermore, within α2 and α3 two similar shapes surface (marked with a continuous slur in Example 4-37 and Example 4-38, illustrated in Example 4-39), and a pivot on the relative

diminished chord is preceded by a descending two-note scalar movement. Yet, all occur in different combinations and at different registers and, despite the similarities, constitute three distinct lines.

Example 4-39 Segments α1, α2 and α3.



Jackson's use of such a collage in this example seems to have been an important strategy in his early solos. In fact, perhaps one of Jackson's most astute characteristics is exactly his ability to play with the material at hand, whether improvised patterns or others that he has previously studied. We might even say that Jackson, representative of improvising jazz musicians, is a *bricoleur*; that the vibist both 'creates' and 'recreates'.[144] This strategy has been identified in the work of other bebop artists, as for example in Ramsey's account of the music of Bud Powell. Ramsey has noted that 'Powell had a firm command of established

[144] The literal translation of *bricoleur* is 'handyman', although there is a huge gap between its usage in the French language with its English translation. In French, bricolage emphases a process in which one plays with the material at hand to solve a task or problem and the ability to create with the material that happens to be available. Bricolage as a term is closely associated to the work of anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who used it to describe patterns of thought. Lévi-Strauss notes: 'in the continual reconstruction from the same materials, it is always earlier ends which are called upon to play the part of means: the signified changes into the signifying and vice versa'. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind,* trans. George Weidenfield and Nicholson Ltd (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), 13-14.

riffs and stylistic approaches appropriate to the musical context […], and he used them'.[145] Beyond the musical characteristics, the practice of collage is also metaphorical and has resonances in African American culture. Poet Elizabeth Alexander, for example, used the term 'collage' to describe the multiplicity of voices that coexist in African American identity: this idea that has its roots in the work of W.E.B. Dubois, whose metaphor of 'doubleness' summarised the encounter between Africans and Europeans in America by constructing an image that includes two separate worlds clearly demarcated, yet inextricably entwined. Alexander specifically moved away from a dichotomous opposition of 'black' and 'white', to a perspective that includes multiple voices, and favoured a conception of collage that 'maps a theoretical space in which the myriad particulars of identity can reside'.[146]

There is a crucial difference between activities when engaging in such a collage of musical ideas. Whereas acquiring the craftsmanship and learning the style is work, the creation and elaboration of a given compositional device, or an improvised idea, is play. In Laurence Dreyfus' words, 'elaboration is content with elegance, an associative logic, and an eye for similarities'.[147] Gesa Kordes emphasised this playfulness inherent in musical practice by explaining that 'Bach himself seems to have relied heavily on the creative power inherent in extant musical material, especially when improvising'.[148] Although development and realisation appear as integral features of the vibist's creative processes, this playfulness that is apparent in his music has larger implications for Jackson's practice as it situates him in a certain creative legacy and within the primarily oral traditions of African American processes of music making. 'Play', Ramsey observes, 'represents some important cultural work, firmly situating bebop within the priorities of black vernacular culture'.[149]

Bringing the focus back to Jackson's improvisations, in the 1952 take of 'Bags' Groove' the vibist bases the construction of his melodic lines on the elaboration of a similar idea. His treatment of the first bar of the turnaround and the bar that precedes it are the same, but with a small rhythmic twist compared to what he played a chorus earlier (Example 4-40). Likewise, in 'Opus and Interlude' he uses the same tactic on the blues turnaround, pivoting

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[145] Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 149.

[146] Elizabeth Alexander, 'Collage: An Approach to Reading African-American Women's Literature', (Ph.D diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1992). Cited in Monson, 'Doubleness and Jazz Improvisation', 289.

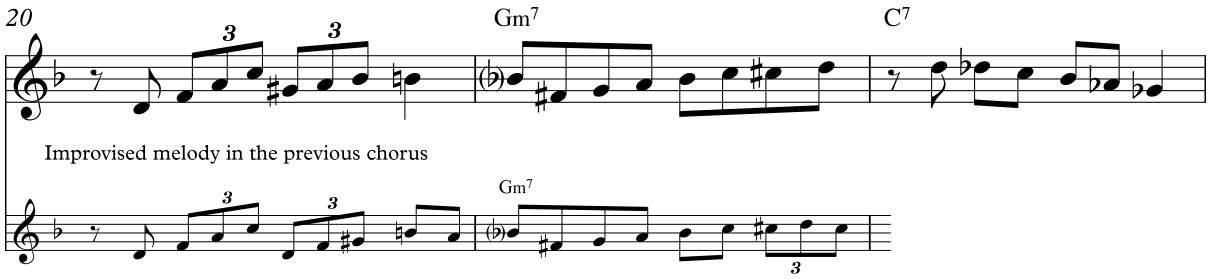
[147] Dreyfus, *Bach and the Patterns of Invention*, 22.

[148] Gesa Kordes, 'Self Parody and the "hunting Cantata", Bwv 208: An Aspect of Bach's Compositional Process', *Bach* 22, no. 2 (1991), 38.

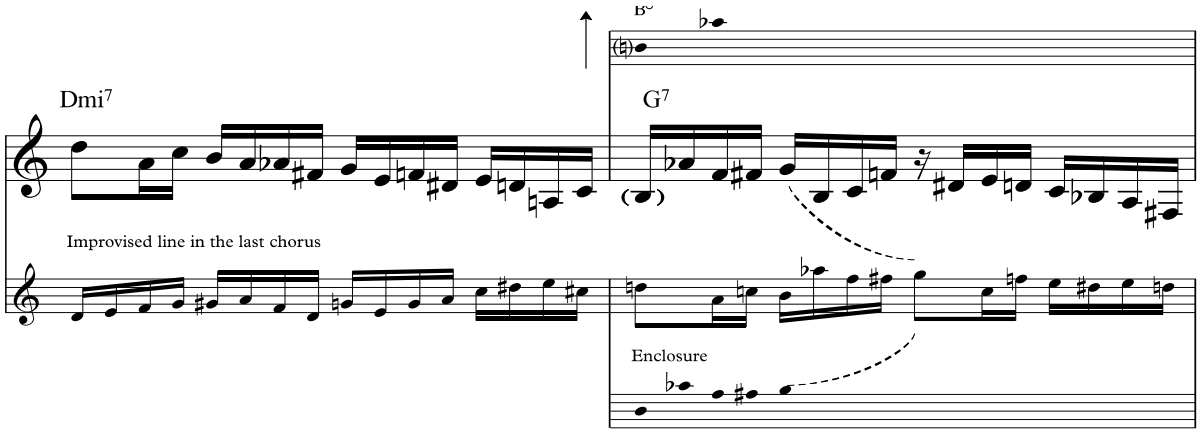
[149] Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 22.

on the related diminished and with an enclosure lands on the tonic of the dominant (Example 4-41).

Example 4-40. Excerpt, 'Bags' Groove', second chorus leading to the turnaround, mm. 20–22.
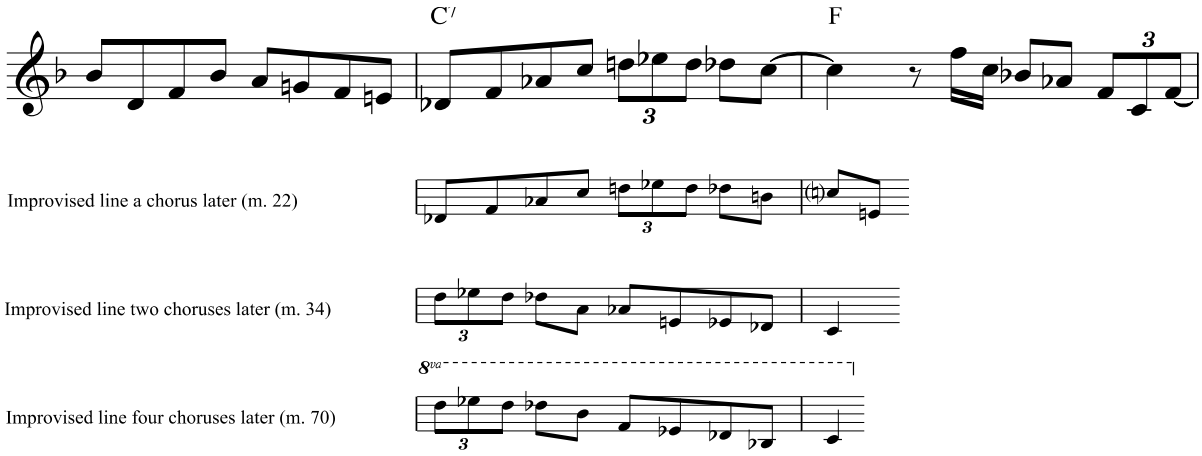


Example 4-41. Excerpt, 'Opus and Interlude', mm. 9–10.



In a later take of 'Bags' Groove' Jackson's harmonic substitution of the dominant chord in the turnaround occurs four times throughout his solo.[150] I draw attention to the affinity between the alterations of a single musical segment, where Jackson shows several different generative procedures as he attempts to create a compelling musical shape over a C7 chord (Example 4-42). As always there are several harmonic possibilities here: Jackson could have been thinking of an altered dominant scale or, working his way backwards to build tension, a tritone substitution to the dominant. Nonetheless, what matters is the influence of oneself in the progress of the solo; the playfulness with which Jackson discovers and elaborates a line by working it out again and again, through adjustments and refusal of adjustments, some that result out of necessity and in a momentary flash, until he engages with several possibilities and directions.

[150] Miles Davis, *Bags' Groove*, Prestige PRLP 7109, 1954, LP.

Example 4-42. Excerpt, 'Bags' Groove', 1954 take, mm. 9–11.



There is good reason to suppose that in certain passages he was being proactive, where he contemplated the voice leading and direction of the melodic line—at least in some cursory way—before he arrived at the measure in which these lines occur. To believe otherwise would suggest that (in the previous example), midway into the cadences, Jackson copy-pasted set lines to fit the harmony due to either lack of inspiration or unintentionally.

One can easily see how Gates' theory applies to the analysis of Jackson's music and specifically to the shared patterns that are embedded in it. The idea that there is potential for repetition, variation and transformation of musical material underlies all the examples in this section. Of course, whether the passages under consideration were intended to be interpreted as referencing Parker or the idiom remains an issue, but of less importance. Though it may not be possible to prove that any specific example of musical reference was indeed a conscious reference, that some of those devices are metaphorical and superordinate to the improvised line, and are well within the interpretive discourse of musicians and audiences, is well established. It also highlights that these compositional devices constituted the trade for musicians of the idiom, who worked those structures again and again to achieve mastery in improvisation.

In archaeology, to paraphrase Robert Gjerdingen, one can infer midpoints of influence and style based on the distribution and dissemination of potsherds and other fragments of material culture.[151] When, as demonstrated, one encounters—recording after recording—similar patterns and schemata, and when those are distributed across the music, of which the lineage is to some extent known to converge to specific practitioners (such as Parker) or

[151] Robert Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style: Being an Essay on Various Schemata Characteristic of Eighteenth-Century Music* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 59.

geographical locations (Detroit, New York), one would expect to find similar patterns in the works of those seminal figures who were distributed in the host music scenes. That is indeed the case. We can therefore, through an archaeology of musical utterances, uncover the schemata and patterns found in jazz, to listen and observe to what they tell us about jazz modes of musical thought. In fact, I trust that there are so many such signals of cultural significance in jazz improvisation that one could write a formal history of its development on this basis alone.

5 SCHEMATA AND THE JAZZ LANGUAGE: POINTS OF CONVERGENCE

All knowledge is remembering.

Plato, *Meno*

And how will art live as knowledge?

Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus* (1948)

Up to this point I have discussed a selection of musical elements and values that laid the foundation for jazz culture in the 1940s. I have highlighted patterns and stylistic devices that represent specific cultural knowledge, suggesting that jazz is, among many things, a form of musical conduct; a carefully learned set of musical behaviours in a community of practice. Although I present these stylistic devices as mere codifications of a living musical praxis, nowadays they form part of the patrimony of jazz-in-the-forties and I only aspire to point at what seems logical to me and is often regarded as self-evident to practising musicians. Bebop, for all the inadequacy of its naming, is still the *lingua franca* for thousands of jazz musicians.[1] Many contemporary practitioners still undergo the process of becoming familiar with this a repertory of sounds and compositional devices. In learning to transcribe and to reproduce one aspect of the performances (the improvised solo), one eventually becomes comfortable about making educated guesses concerning the direction of the improvised line (a necessary skill for improvisers), which is further evidence of the frequency with which these structures occur in jazz solos. Scholars learning to judge the way such devices are presented in an improvisation eventually arrive at a fuller understanding of certain aspects of the jazz craft. In this section I want to address a selection of schemata that constitute and embody much socially constructed knowledge, in which corporeality, emotion and abstraction are intertwined. Although in contrast to patterns, schemata are not defined by their articulation, I propose that some of the elements that they carry are coherent with the metaphorical structure of some of the fundamental concepts found in jazz and are represented in both musical and ordinary language.

[1] Owens, *Bebop*, 4.

5.1 The Related Diminished

I have highlighted elsewhere Jackson's usage of the related diminished scale on a dominant chord.[2] As Barry Harris—whose pedagogical approach has gone a long way towards the development of a theoretical language for jazz in the 1940s—explains, the related diminished chord is built from the third of the corresponding dominant chord or scale.[3] Jackson used the related diminished thoroughly in his improvisations, as did many of his colleagues. For example, Parker used this device in what was Jackson's favourite jazz record, Parker's solo on 'Oh Lady Be Good' (Example 5-1).[4] Jackson remembered that:

> My first two recordings of Bird were 'Hothouse' and 'Lady Be Good.' I didn't really have a good record player at that time, so I would put the record in the jacket, take it to the house of a friend with a good record player, and then I'd sit there all day and play it. I was so fascinated by that. That solo on 'Lady Be Good' is still a classic. I was just in heaven. I just couldn't believe something so fascinating, at that time.[5]

In 'Lady Be Good' Parker pivots on a B diminished scale to anticipate the third of an A dominant scale.[6] Below I provide a few samples of Jackson's usage of the same device (Example 5-2 and Example 5-3). In 'Anthropology', Jackson pivots from the B to the Ab, before reaching a target point in the melody (the Eb on the Cmi7 chord). In the blues 'Opus and Interlude', Jackson used this device twice and at the same point of the turnaround at different moments in his solo. Example 5-3 demonstrates the pivot from the B to the Ab on the G7 chord. It also highlights the specific pattern that Jackson used to enclose the target note (G) on both occasions, which Owens lists as one of Parker's favourite devices (the 1-2 enclosure: a minor third leap downwards followed by a chromatic movement to reach the target note). Taking note of the statistical reoccurrence of the enclosing pattern in this context, it seems that the pattern is ingrained by the way musicians used this progression (by

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[2] Gagatsis, 'Bags Still Grooves', 150.

[3] Barry Harris, *The Barry Harris Workshop Video and Handbook* (Ontario Canada: Bop City Productions Inc., 1998), 18,34.
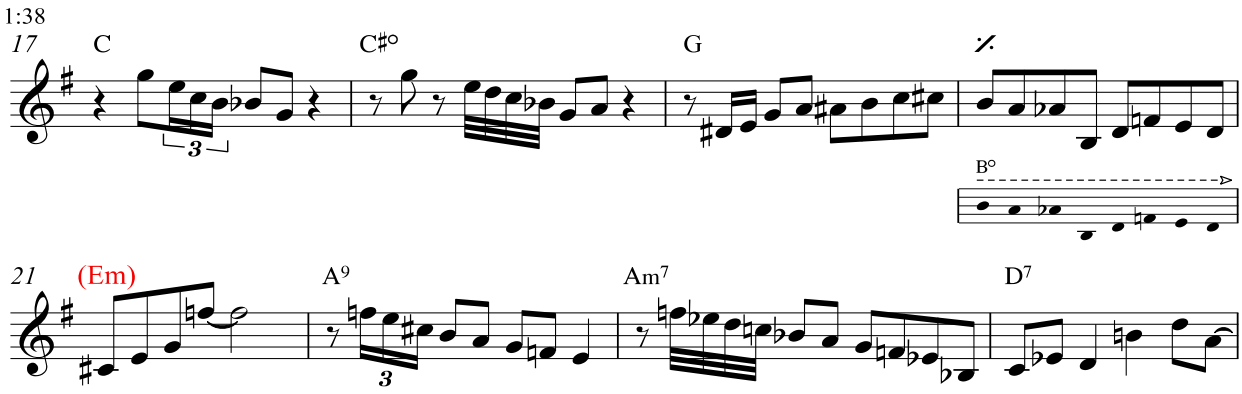
[4] Parker's solo on 'Oh Lady Be Good' was according to accounts Jackson's favourite solo. My knowledge of this comes from Jon Faddis, frequent collaborator, neighbour and long-time friend to Milt Jackson. I was given the opportunity to study under Faddis for a year, during which he shared the above information, and he also confirmed the information in an email correspondence in 2013. Owens noted that Parker's most common chord substitution was the dominant minor-ninth chord, which the saxophonist employed both as a primary and secondary dominant Although Owens does not report so, Parker's usage of the ♭9 interval in the dominant chord is because of the diminished scale that corresponds to the dominant chord (for example a B diminished would fit a G7 chord and the Ab would create a minor ninth interval to the root). Owens, 'Charlie Parker', 16.

[5] Woodard, 'Milt Jackson: Elegant Vibrations', Jazz Times (September 1999): https://jazztimes.com/features/milt-jackson-elegant-vibrations/ (accessed 3 February 2016).

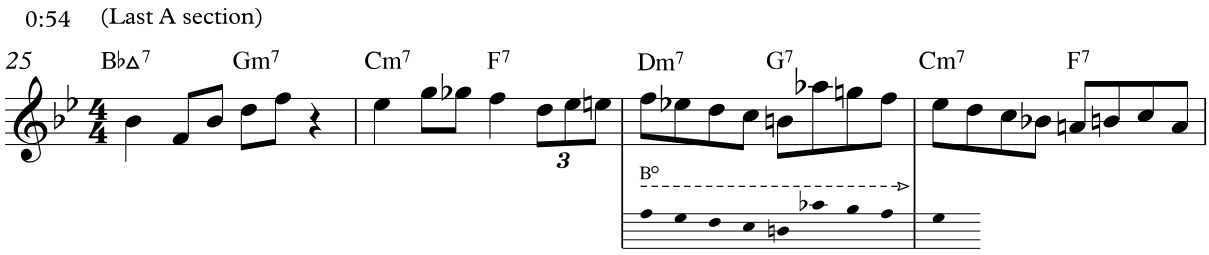
[6] By 'pivoting' on the relative diminished I refer to the change of direction of the melodic line by jumping from one chord tone to a distant one (for example from B up to Ab).

imposing the related diminished). This sort of 'default form' in many ways suggests that the successful execution of the improvised line is determined by the frequency of the chord-tone treatment of the progression.

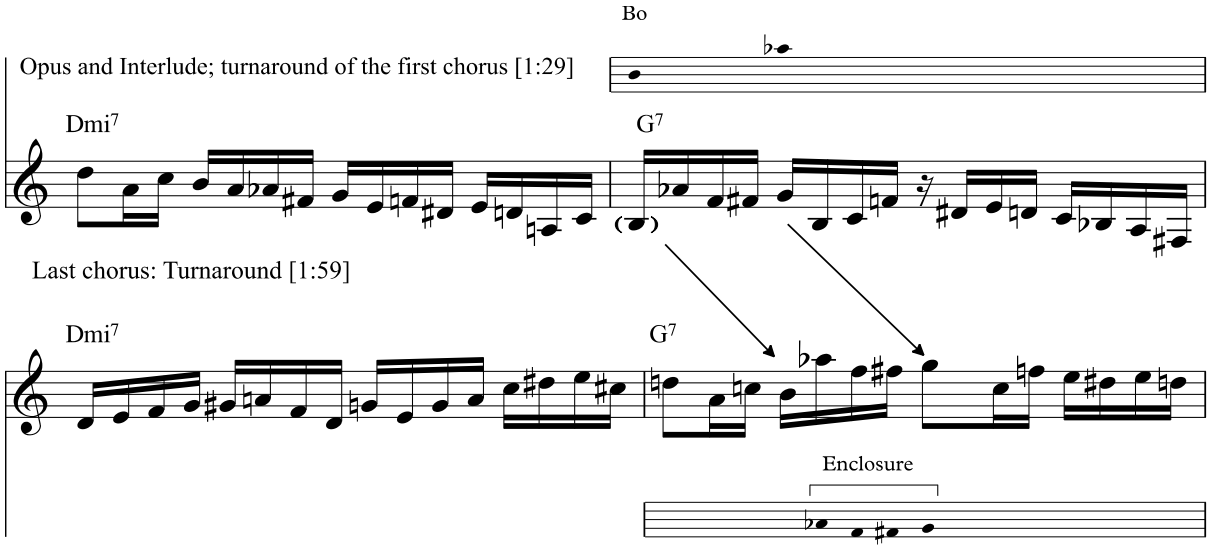
Example 5-1. Excerpt, Charlie Parker's solo on 'Oh Lady Be Good', mm. 17–24



Example 5-2 Jackson's usage of the related diminished, 'Anthropology', mm. 25-28

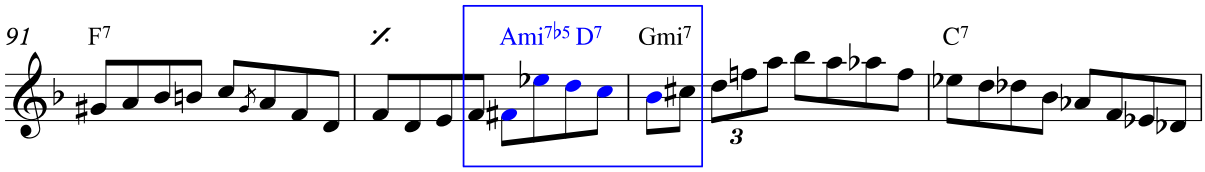


Example 5-3. Jackson's usage of the related diminished 'Opus and Interlude'

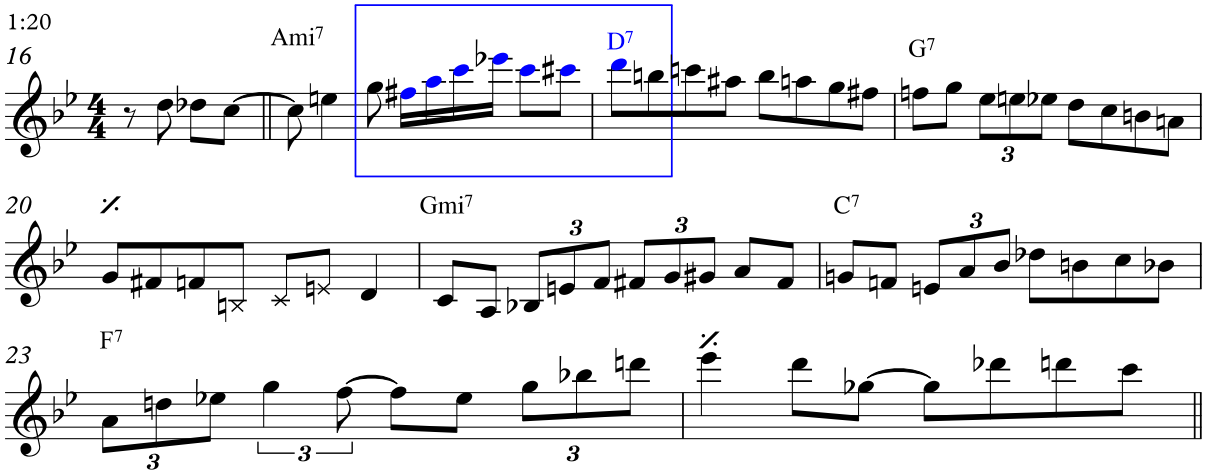


I present a further example below; this is taken from 'Bag's Groove', from which I have presented several 'pivot moves' in the previous chapter (Example 5-4). It was less common for Jackson to build a diminished from the tonic of the blues; however, it seems plausible that the vibist here was thinking of V7 to the ii-minor 7 chord. In this scenario, the G♭ diminished seems rather to imply a iii-minor 7 to VI7 progression that leads into the ii-minor 7 chord. Jackson repeated this device on numerous occasions, as in John Lewis' composition, 'Delaunay's Dilemma' (Example 5-5).[7]

Example 5-4 Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Bag's Groove', 1954 take, mm. 91–94



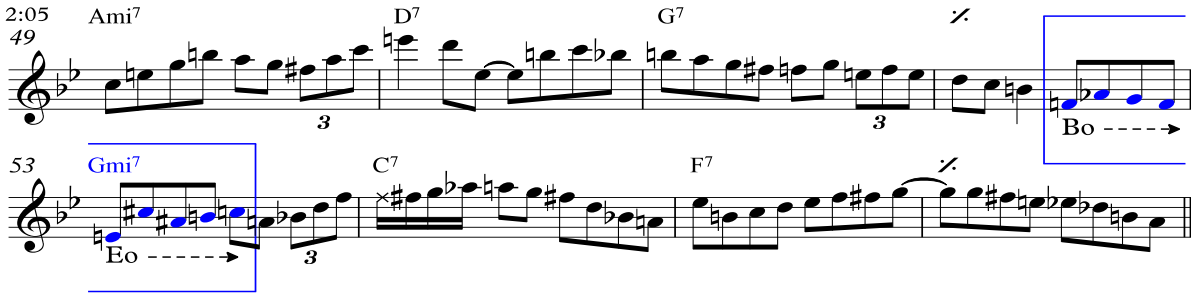
Example 5-5 Jackson's usage of the related diminished and enclosure in 'Delaunay's Dilemma'



The vibist repeats the same device a chorus later, again on the bridge, where he employs the diminished two consecutive times (Example 5-6). First, he implies a diminished that resolves to the third of the following dominant chord (C7), bypassing the ii-minor chord (Gmi7), from which point he uses the related diminished of the dominant (E dim).

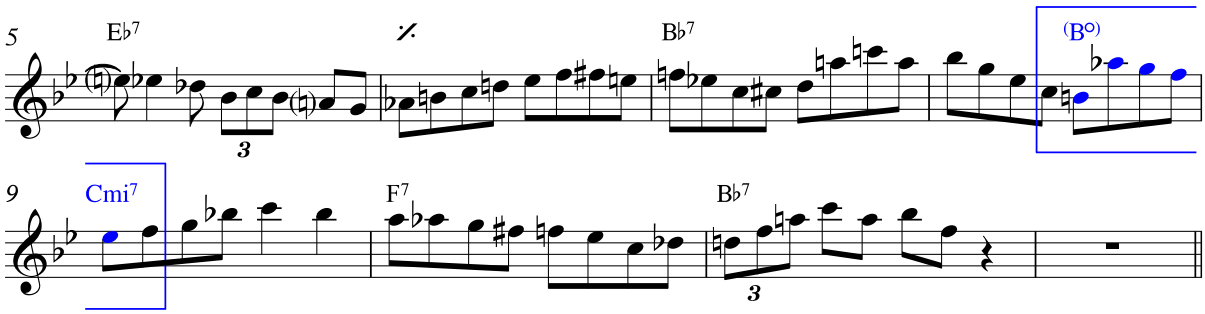
[7] Modern Jazz Quartet. *Django* (Prestige PRLP 7057).

Example 5-6. Jackson's usage of the related diminished, 'Delaunay's Dilemma', mm. 49–56



In the next example, Jackson superimposes the related diminished to lead his melodic line into the ii-minor chord of the turnaround 'Down Home Blues' (Example 5-7). Jackson imposes a V to the B♭7 chord, pivots on the related diminished and resolves it to the third of the following minor chord. The melodic line is identical to the one highlighted previously but in this scenario Jackson implies the progression. It is important to note that the B♭7 chord here shares the same diminished with the dominant (G), and therefore creates the same tension until it resolves to the ii-minor chord.

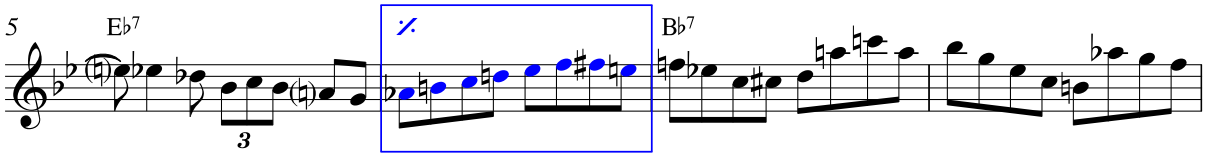
Example 5-7. Excerpt, Jackson solo, 'Down Home Blues', leading to the turnaround, mm. 5–12



Jackson's variations quickly enter their own channel but his version(s) are not sharply distinct from those of Parker. Each performance is rather a realisation of a shared mode of musical thought which may be difficult to specify exactly or to pin down to a 'definite version'. None of the related diminished models are completely identical with each other. The transmission of these 'modes of musical thought' required remembering, copying and realising, in various mixes, and no realisation has a claim of authenticity against another, or proximity to an original in this respect. Rather, the process of realising the mode of musical thought became a proof of authenticity for the jazz of the time.

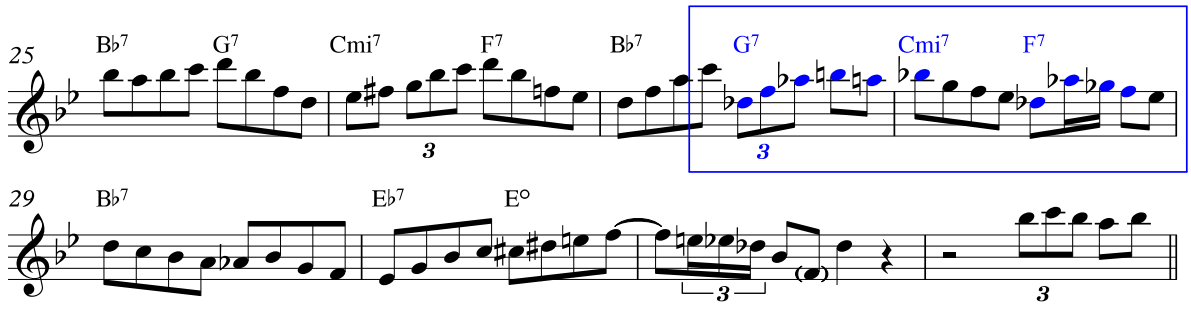
I also want to highlight a device which requires a more thorough knowledge of the bebop treatment of conventional harmony. In the next example, Jackson plays what seems like a diminished scale on top of an Eb7 chord (Example 5-8). What Jackson does here is create a V to I resonance by implying a related diminished scale to lead into the I7 chord (the related diminished here functions as a V. I reprint the example below to highlight a different section of the solo).

Example 5-8. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Down Home Blues', related diminished, mm. 5–12



I need to pause for a moment to examine the usage of the related diminished as is evident in the previous example. Harris notes that the diminished chord is related to four dominant chords. These can be found by lowering each of the diminished chord tones to form a dominant chord. As a result, the dominants D7, F7, Ab7 and B7 are all related because they share the same related diminished (Eb diminished). It is easy to observe that F7 and B7, as well as D7 and Ab7, are also a tritone apart from each other, making them the most popular substitution in jazz harmony. Jackson used the tritone substitution countless times in his solos. For example, in 'Delaunay's Dilemma' he used a tritone to approach the Cmi7 chord (Example 5-9).

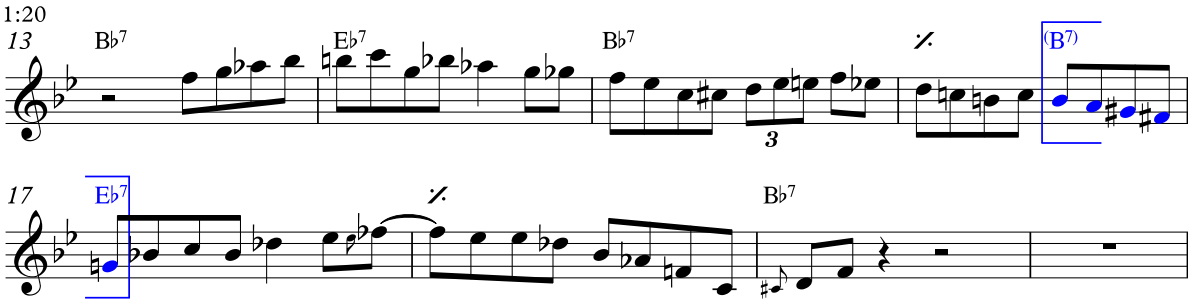
Example 5-9. Excerpt, Jackson's tritone substitution in 'Delaunay's Dilemma', mm. 25–32



It is also interesting to observe the less common substitutions in Jackson's solos. By using Harris' premise of the four related dominants in 'Delaunay's Dilemma' (in this
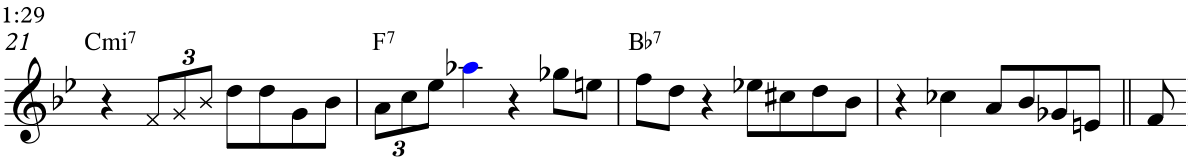
scenario, C7, Eb7, Gb7, A7, Example 5-6), a plausible substitution for the E diminished and an explanation for Jackson's note choice would be a C7 to Gb7, until he resolves his line to the root of the following dominant chord (C). In the next example, another substitution, common in jazz, is presented by adopting Harris' theoretical premise. Jackson plays a B diminished to lead into the I7 chord (bar 6 of the blues, second bar of the next example). Jackson could be thinking a tritone substitution (F7—B7, with F7 acting as an implied V to lead to the Bb7), then performing a related diminished starting from the D# or an Ab diminished.

Example 5-10. Excerpt, tritone substitution in 'Down Home Blues', mm. 13–19



Another example of such harmonic treatment is provided in the example below (Example 5-11). In the same track, 'Down Home Blues', in bar two, Jackson leads his improvised line into an Ab. The sharp nine chord degree here could be explained in terms of a related dominant chord, Ab7, and as a plausible substitution for the F dominant chord.

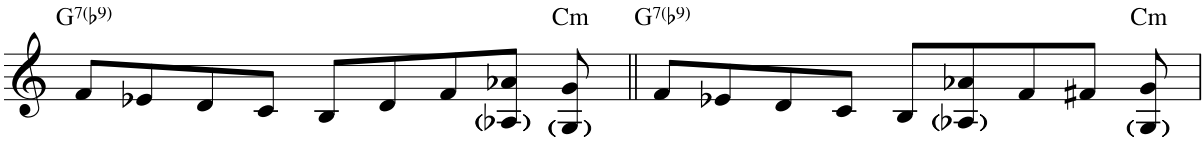
Example 5-11. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Down Home Blues', mm. 21–24



Owens lists the related diminished as ranking third in order of frequency of appearance in Parker's solos. He does not, however, name the diminished as such but rather observes that the lines contain characteristics of the harmonic minor scale: the raised 7th and lowered 6th scale degrees (B and Ab in this example); the 3rd and minor 9th degrees of the

dominant chord.[8] He also made an interesting remark that predates mine, noting that in the music of Parker 'lying beneath the surface of most of his improvisations is another factor […] Typically entire phrases, and even entire choruses, and groupings of choruses, are goal-oriented; they arrive on a final note that lies at the end of a lengthy stepwise descent'.[9] Owens gives the following example to demonstrate his point.

Example 5-12. Charlie Parker's usage of the dominant b9 chord (after transcription by Owens)



Owens observed a five-note scalar descent to the third of the dominant chord (B), then a rise to the minor ninth of the dominant chord (Ab), followed by a final descent to the tonic G. (I am much more inclined to read the G as fifth of the tonic minor chord rather than the root of descending dominant as Owens reads it but I present the argument as he proposed it.) Taking note of the statistical occurrence of the enclosing pattern and the related diminished as they appear in both Jackson's and Parker's improvisations, it seems that enclosing a chord tone of the corresponding dominant chord with a 1-2 enclosure forms a pattern that seemed to ingrain the related diminished schema. Owens recognised the underlying theoretical premise in Parker's usage of the dominant chord but did not identify it. The family likeness of these improvised lines has been observed in other musical cultures as well. David Schulenberg, for example, has highlighted the similarities between Bach's Prelude in A minor, BWV 931 and other compositions by Bach's students, whose variations seemed to be realisations over archetypal bass lines.[10] Schulenberg notes that 'three of the seven distinct movements in C.P.E. Bach's *Magnificat* were built over a descending scale in the bass that has been observed elsewhere in his music'.[11]

Closer examination of Jackson's solo on 'Soulful' reveals several other traits of the time (Example 5-13). Jackson plays a major seven arpeggio from the seventh of one dominant chord (G7) resolving down to the ninth (Eb) of the following chord (Db7). The

[8] Owens, *Bebop*, 31.

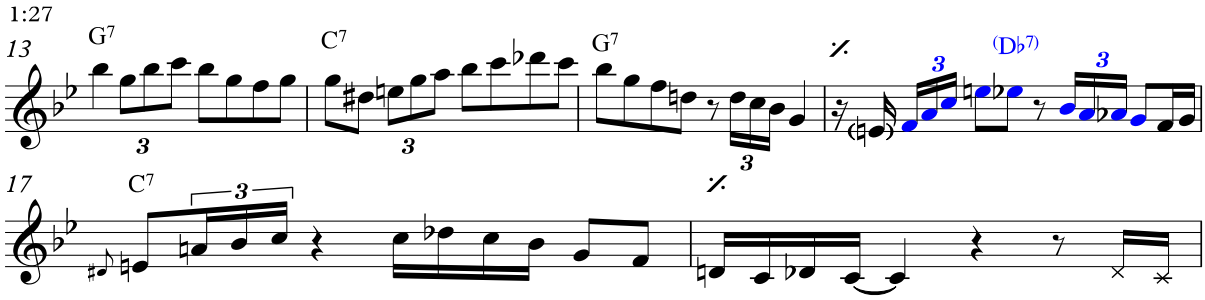
[9] Ibid., 35.

[10] Schulenberg lists various devices that were widely used by Baroque composers. David Schulenberg, 'Composition and Improvisation in the School of J.S. Bach', *Bach Perspectives* 1(1995), 26.

[11] Ibid., 10-11.

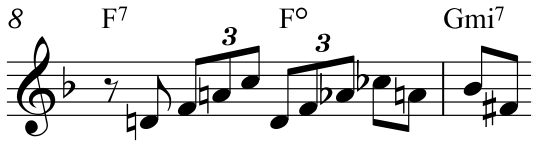
(D♭7) chord here which Jackson implies is the tritone substitution of the G7 chord, leading to the four (IV7) chord of the blues. Jackson moves down a half-diminished ornament of the tritone (B-A-A♭ to G), resolving to the third degree of the four (IV7) chord.

Example 5-13. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Soulful', mm. 13–18



Performing arpeggios from any chord tone was of course a common device but some variations were used more frequently than others. For example, in the first chorus of his solo in 'Bag's Groove', in the bars leading to the turnaround Jackson plays I7 to I diminished to land on (or 'arrive at') the ii – minor chord (Example 5-14). This was a device often encountered in bebop, for example in the music of Gillespie and Fats Navarro.

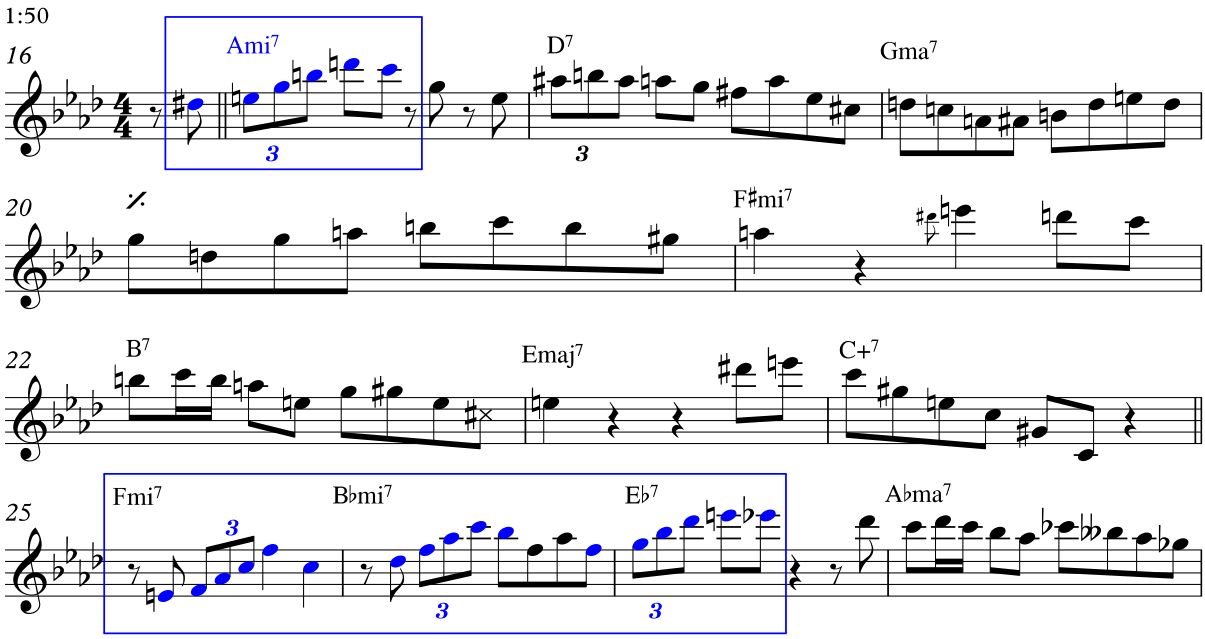
Example 5-14 Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Bag's Groove', 1954 take, mm.



Jackson's solo on 'All the Things You Are' demonstrates a few variations (Example 5-15).[12] Below I have highlighted an ascending arpeggio in triplets, which he resolves diatonically below, to the third of the chord. Then, Jackson performs an ascending arpeggio in triplets which he resolves down to the fifth of a chord. He repeats an ascending arpeggio in triplets resolving to the root of the B♭ minor seven chord. In his last variation, Jackson creates an arpeggio on the related diminished of the chord E♭ (here E diminished), which he resolves chromatically below, to the fifth of the major chord. Similarly,

[12] First track of *The Modern Jazz Quartet/Milt Jackson Quintet* (PRLP 7059), NYC, 22 December 1952.

Example 5-15. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'All the Things You Are', mm. 16–28
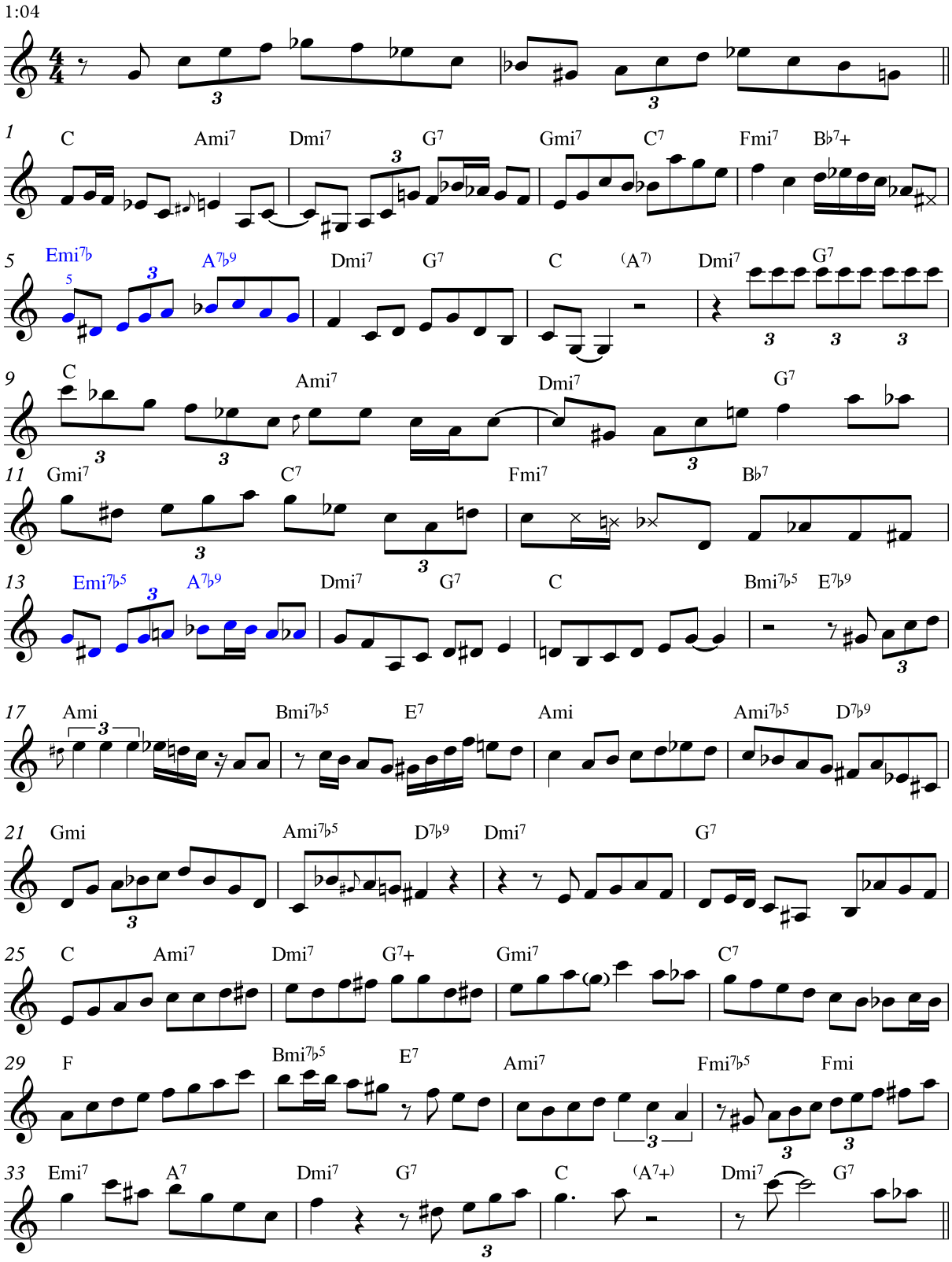


The treatment of the dominant chords in each of the above examples presents family resemblances. In fact, in a larger context each case represents the entry of an important aspect of the language of bebop as all excerpts reveal a common way, a schema, of using the dominant chords which was appropriate to the style: namely the specific treatment of the related diminished scale. Given Jackson's professional relationship with Parker, his presence in the movement and his fondness for the alto saxophonist's music, I propose that the treatment of the diminished was not a mere theoretical category but, rather, a socially ingrained musical habit shaped by Jackson's interaction with bebop's cultural environment.

5.2 Moving One Dominant into Another

The examples that I have highlighted so far account for a fraction of the employment of related diminished schema in Jackson's and Parker's music. Although it is impossible to determine precisely how or when Jackson acquired this knowledge, such an archaeology of musical utterances permit us to understand the stylistic devices of the time and reveal the musicians' modes of musical thought. In this respect, an examination of Jackson's solo in 'Wonder Why' allows interesting observations to be made about a mode of musical thought that characterised his improvisations at the time (Example 5-16).

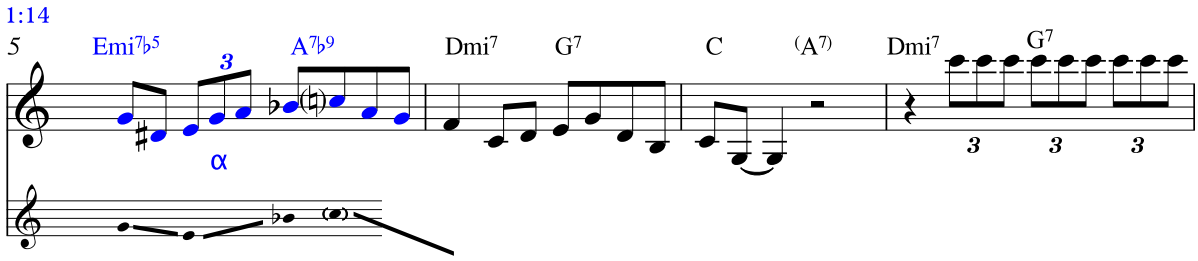
Example 5-16 Jackson's solo, 'Wonder Why', first chorus
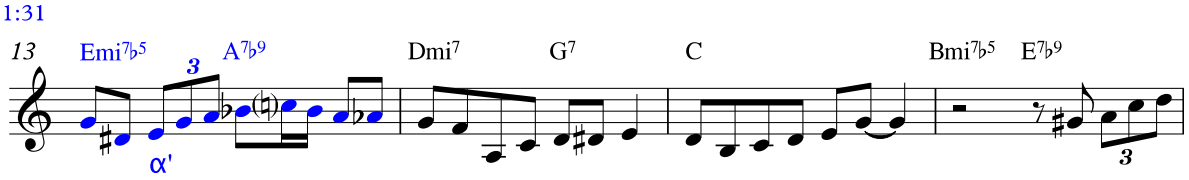


I want to draw attention to two musical segments similar in design, which appear in bars five and thirteen of Jackson's solo in the song 'Wonder Why'. Below I single out the lines, which

are marked with α and α' (Example 5-17 and Example 5-18). Both are performed over the same progression at different points in the chorus. These are nearly identical but with a small rhythmic twist.

Example 5-17. Excerpt, 'Wonder Why', mm. 5–8
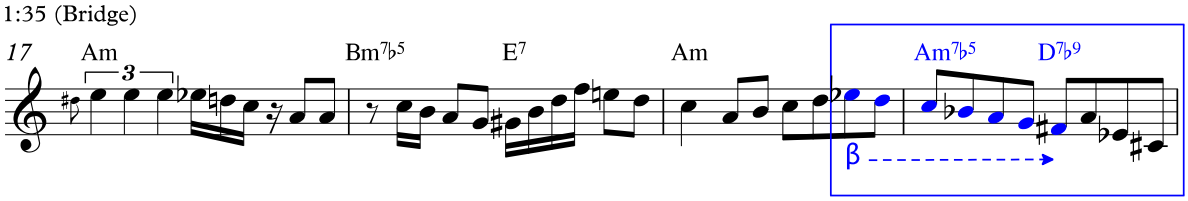


Example 5-18. Excerpt, 'Wonder Why', mm. 13–16



A few bars later, in the same chorus, Jackson plays an F dominant scale down to the third of a D7 over another ii -V minor progression (Example 5-19). The excerpt (β) demonstrates the direction of the descending dominant line (the third of the following dominant, D7, where the F# seems to act as a magnetic force).[13]

Example 5-19. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Wonder Why', mm. 17–20
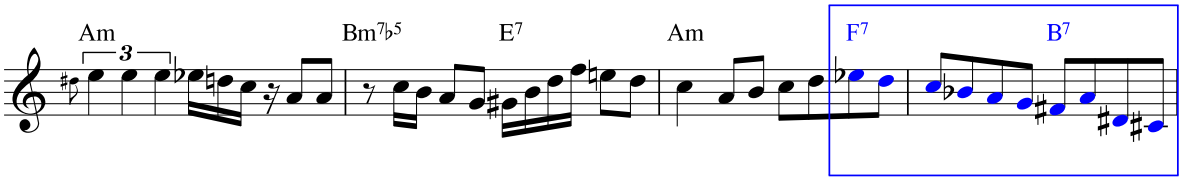


The best plausible explanation for Jackson's note choice may also be an F dominant scale running into a B7. This would not be my choice of explaining Jackson's melody line, especially since the target point here is a G minor 7 chord, or the fifth degree of the C

[13] Steve Larson has developed a detailed theory of forces in music. See Larson and Robert S. Hatten. *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2012).

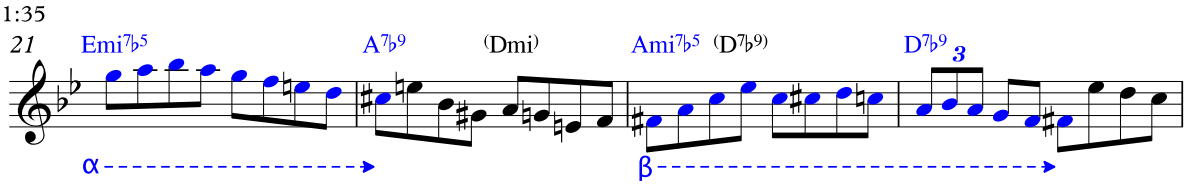
dominant chord. I just offer this possibility to demonstrate the range of options available by considering substitutions based on the related diminished (Example 5-20).

Example 5-20. Chord substitution, 'Wonder Why', mm. 17–20



Comparably, from the same record, I present a further example of Jackson improvising similar lines in 'Moonray' (Example 5-21). Starting from an E half-diminished chord, the melody α descends to the third of the A7 chord in bar 2. The line β shows how Jackson is being playful with the melodic material and pivots on the related diminished, by jumping from the F# to the Eb.

Example 5-21 Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Moonray', mm. 21-24



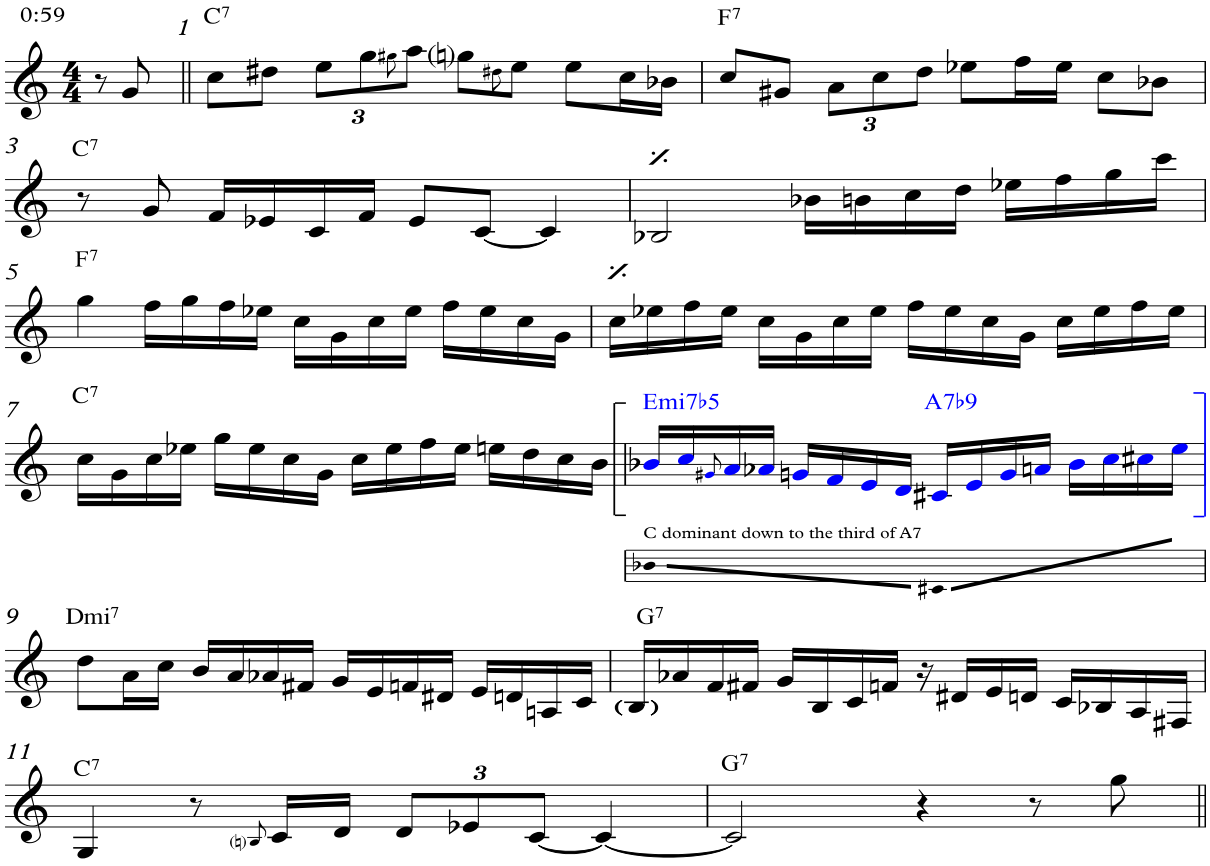
Each of these lines is unique and yet they share many features. All segments are improvised over a minor ii-V harmonic progression. As, once more, Barry Harris would explain, the sound here is a dominant (mixolydian) scale, going down to the third of the following dominant chord. Although in the first two examples (α and α') the lines do not move downwards towards the third of the A7 (or to the following dominant as in the excerpt β) let us examine this theoretical reduction in the above examples. The Emi7b5 chord is related to the Gmi7 chord here and therefore to the corresponding dominant, C7 (the E half diminished chord here moves towards an F major). Taking this into consideration—and in line with Harris' theoretical reduction—the melodic material in examples α and α' is a C7 scale moving to the following, A7, chord. Jackson remains faithful to the sound of the progression by articulating the C7 chord.[14] For improvisatory practice of the time, and for

[14] It might be considered that the C natural in the melodic segments α and α' suggests an altered chord. It is, however, unlikely that Jackson would have known of the altered chord at the time, not as a theoretical premise

Jackson specifically, the treatment of this progression (a dominant scale moving to the following dominant) was the prototype sound.[15] As in the previous paradigm (the related diminished), an underlying principle, a 'schema', is represented by the quality of the improvised lines, not their exact articulation; essentially the thinking and the musical knowledge that preceded the recording. In the end, all excerpts (α, α' and β) are products of the same musical instincts.

Schemata are tonally mobile and as long as the songs allowed some sort of manipulation, then Jackson applied this device regardless of the compositional framework.

Example 5-22 Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Opus and Interlude', mm. 1-12



anyway. Also, an altered chord would have an E♭ in the scale and not an E natural. The E♭ in the beginning functions as an approach note to the chord tone E and does not have a function other than leading to the chord tone.

[15] Prototype here refers to the ability to abstract common features from similar experiences in order to create a generalised reaction. Michael I Posner, 'Empirical Studies of Prototypes', in *Noun Classes and Categorization: Proceedings of a Symposium on Categorization and Noun Classification, Eugene, Oregon, 7 October 1983* John Benjamins Publishing, 1986). In this respect, a prototype here can be both a way to filter information (to listen to the sound of a dominant scale going down to the third of another), as well as an underlying principle, an exemplar, that enables musicians to react when encountering this progression. For an overview of prototype sound definitions see Berkowitz, *The Improvising Mind*, 52-55.

For example, in the previous example Jackson used the same generative procedure to create movement in bar eight of the blues, which leads into the turnaround (Example 5-22). Jackson here implies a iii–VI progression that leads to the turnaround of the blues. This is a device we often encounter in his improvisations in the bars leading to the turnaround of the blues.

These traits had a fair share of responsibility in configuring jazz styles and the way in which practitioners or knowing listeners responded to jazz of the time. They are further evidence that the jazz style of the 1940s and its musical processes were a reflection and symptomatic of broader underlying ideologies, and can render improvisation amenable to historical research. Although it is possible that some of the devices I have described up to that point may have been used by musicians who were less associated with the bebop movement, I argue that these schemata were culturally augmented or nuanced through their usage. Becoming acquainted with such a repertory of improvisational devices can lead us to a greater awareness of subtle differences in Jackson's music and eventually allow us to relate his musical outputs more precisely to those of other practitioners, such as Parker's. In many ways, the analytic objectification of the kind of devices that I have highlighted may provide the cornerstone for a historically informed and situated music theory of jazz improvisation. My focus is on these traits as a code of musical conduct and as a mode of musical behaviour, whose frequency and transformation I trace across a body of performances. I examine some of the musical structures that I have identified and I explore one of the ways with which musical creativity and stylistic convention serve as a document of critical analysis, bringing statistical evidence to illustrate the stylistic importance and historical significance of some of these structures. Although schemata are indissolubly linked to dynamic processes, to which gestural shaping is paramount, in this chapter I am concerned only with the pitch relationships of these structures. I return to consider the gestural information of Jackson's improvisations in the next chapter.

5.3 Defining a Schema: the Case of Bebop

Highly stereotypical musical devices, such as those described up to this point, are clearly neither patterns, given the absence of repeated articulation, nor mere theoretical constructs. Rather, by situating them in a cognitive/psychological research context, they demonstrate categories of mind that were fundamental to jazz culture in the 1940s. My reading of such devices, therefore, is that they document a culturally qualified behaviour by Jackson, in a very specific circumstance, and that they offer us a currency with which to develop an approach of observing the musical history, culture and cognition of jazz of the time. Paul

DiMaggio notes that schemata are knowledge structures that represent events, providing default assumptions about their characteristics and plausibly argues that it may be useful to treat the schema as a basic unit for analysis for the study of culture.[16] Indeed, schemata may be the most discerning means for examining the trajectory of dominant formations in jazz (whether continuous or discontinuous), and to observe in their transformations more localised changes. Having provided examples of the kind of categories of information I identify in Jackson's music, I now want to focus on schema theory in music, to make a more explicit link with jazz improvisation and proceed with my analysis.

Defining a schema is difficult and, in the end, it very much depends on how one evaluates similarity. The question is where to look for clear answers and definitions, given that schemata have been the property of a wide variety of not-always-adjunct disciplines. Quite on the contrary: in fact, from its very inception the schema concept has been less the premise of one discipline as much as a collection of sub-disciplines operating in a wide variety of fields. On one occasion, for example, Roland Barthes maintained that 'in the Greek meaning: σχήμα is not the "schema," but, in a much livelier way, the body's gesture caught in action and not contemplated in repose'.[17] Although searching for theories of the mind in the work of Barthes may at first sight not be a good starting point, the psychologist George Mandlair noted that 'explorations of the nature of thought, like the rest of psychology, began life in the philosopher's armchair […] Aristotle's priority cannot be gainsaid'.[18] Schema theory is no exception. Philosophers seem to have been among the first who attempted to explain the ability of humans to successfully classify information deriving from our senses and experiences. Vasilis Byros has traced the identification of the qualities that define a schema all the way back to Aristotle, who noted that 'We know things […] by a psychic process analogous to them. There exist in the mind schemata (σχήματα) and movements (κινήσεις) corresponding to the external objects'.[19]

We see how in the above formulation Aristotle identifies the mind's ability to represent a sensed experience, our knowledge base of this experience and a mechanism for

[16] Paul DiMaggio, 'Culture and Cognition', *Annual Review of Sociology* (1997), 269.

[17] Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments,* trans. Richard Howard (London: Vintage Books, 2002), 4.

[18] George Mandler, *A History of Modern Experimental Psychology: From James and Wundt T Cognitive Science* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: The MIT Press, 2007), 17-18.

[19] Vasilis Byros, 'Foundations of Tonality as Situated Cognition, 1703-1830: An Enquiry Into the Culture and Cognition of Eighteen-Century Tonality with Bethoven's Eroica Symphony as a Case Study', diss., Yale University, 2009), 233. Slightly modified translation from Ross: George Robert Thomson Ross, ed. *Aristotle De Sensu E De Memoria, Text and Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906), 115. Available online https://archive.org/details/aristotledesensu00arisuoft (accessed 26 January 2017)

absorbing and generating information. These features remain foundational to the concept of schema, be it in Western empirical philosophy or cognitive psychology. Robert Gjerdigen, for example, lists three contemporary approaches to the understanding and formation of schemata that focus on 'prototypes', 'exemplars' and 'theories'.[20] In essence, all three definitions come to represent similar ideas. 'Prototypes' define the abstraction of similar experiences and can be used for comparison to evaluate whether an experience is a good example of a schema. 'Exemplars' somehow seem to be following a logic of reversal as they are used for reference to similar judgements. For instance, the illustrated examples of the previous section can be compared with a mixolydian scale going down to the third of the following dominant which is the best exemplar to demonstrate the treatment of the minor progression by Jackson. Similarly, psychologists concerned with children's development use 'theories' to demonstrate ways with which children navigate the world change according to their theories about how the world functions (perception). The schema that corresponds to 'an external object' in Aristotle's formulation cited earlier, a sensed experience, is essentially a *perceived* copy of the environment.

The flexible albeit often imprecise notion of schema has resonances in its usage in music, where one can trace the sources of schemata in music theory, music history and cognitive science.[21] In his examination of Galant music Gjerdigen explains that schema shares meaning with terms like 'idea' or 'form' for Plato, family 'resemblance' for Wittgenstein, 'prototype' for Posner, 'essence' for Putnam, 'archetype' for Rosch, and so forth.[22] Indeed, within the sphere of music theory and music cognition, schemata receive various definitions. These, however, are broadly understood to be classified in one of two categories. In the first category, the focus on schema theory in music (whether it be coupled with music theory, psychology or philosophy) has been increasingly concerned with historical research: schemata are considered to be formed psychologically through the association and statistical correlation of features in time and place.[23] This has been largely the

[20] Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style*, 26.

[21] Vasilis Byros, 'Unearthing the Past: History and Archaeology in Robert Gjerdingen's Music in the Galant Style', *Music Analysis* 31, no. i (2012), 113.

[22] Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style*, 25.

[23] See, for example, Byros, 'Foundations of Tonality as Situated Cognition, 1703-1830'; Vasilis Byros, 'Towards an 'Archaeology' of Hearing: Schemata and Eighteenth-Century Consciousness', *Musica Humana* 1-2(2009); Vasilis Byros, 'Meyer's Anvil: Revisiting the Schema Concept', *Music Analysis* 31, no. iii (2012); Byros, 'Unearthing the Past: History and Archaeology in Robert Gjerdingen's Music in the Galant Style'; Robert Gjerdingen, 'Revisting Meyer's Grammatical Simplicity and Relational Richness', in *Cognitive Basis of Musical Communication*, ed. Mari Riess Jones, and Susan Holleran (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1992); Robert Gjerdingen, 'A Musical Schema: Structure and Style Change, 1720-1900', (PhD

result of the work of Leonard Meyer, whose work engaged in a lifelong programme that argued for the cultural and historical determinacy of musical structure, style and cognition.[24] In Meyer's work, the schema eventually came to represent a variety of categories, mental representations and their sociocultural resonances, this being an extension of the habit-response epistemology that occupied his work since the 1950s. The lexical variations that are observable across Meyer's body of works (habit, habit responses, etc.) and their replacement with the word 'schema' Byros attributes not to changes in Meyer's research agenda but rather to his search for the correct terminology to express an invariant idea: 'that historically and socially affected experience is the basis of applied musical knowledge'.[25] Byros provides a complete survey and explication of Meyer's work which is unnecessary to reproduce here.

In the second category, schemata are posited to be stable descriptions of the tonal grammar that emerge through congruence in the generative system, as in *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*.[26] Lerdhal and Jackendoff's seminal study gave music theory a psychological orientation that came from analogy with generative-transformational linguistics: 'we believe in our generative theory of music can provide a model of how to construct a competence theory (in Chomsky's sense).'[27] Lerdhal and Jackendoff's work has been criticised widely and more recently by Byros.[28] A generous amount of research has also focused on what George Lakoff and Mark Johnson proposed as the 'image schema' which I study in more detail at later stages of this chapter. The image schema has a rather different usage to music theorist than schema. Here it is worth noting Johnson's definition:

> An image schema is a recurring dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to our experience […] Experience […] is to be understood in a very rich, broad sense as including basic perceptual, motor-program, emotional, historical, social and linguistic dimensions.[29]

Ever since Johnson's landmark publication, the image schema has been treated as a topological structure of trans-modal imagery and, in contemporary cognitive linguistics, it is

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diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1984); Robert Gjerdingen, *A Classic Turn of Phrase: Music and the Psychology of Convention* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988); Robert Gjerdingen, 'Defining a Prototypical Utterance', *Psychomusicology* 10(1991); Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style*.

[24] Byros, 'Meyer's Anvil: Revisiting the Schema Concept'.

[25] Ibid., 274.

[26] Fred Lerdhal and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 1983).

[27] Ibid., xi.

[28] Byros, 'Foundations of Tonality as Situated Cognition, 1703-1830'.

[29] Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind. The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), xiv, xvi.

treated as an embodied pre-linguistic structure of experience that motivates conceptual metaphor mappings. The notion has invited treatment from a variety of academic disciplines but, at its origins, cognitive linguistics have used image schemata to theorise about how image schemata shape discourse. In so doing, however, studies have neglected the cultural disposition between body and culture, ignoring how schemata themselves are shaped by discourse, ritual and image culture.[30] Although image schemata have been commonly driven by a neuro-psychological plausible analysis in linguistics, studies within the field of cognitive-linguistics have since been amended by evidence in the neurosciences, cognitive psychology, as well as from computer science. Further work has been conducted under the auspices of cognitive anthropology and in narrower fields of enquiry such as gesture studies and cognitive rhetoric. Given these preliminaries, the main difference between a schema and an image schema seems to be both the intention of its 'creators', as well as the latter's occurrence in the cognitive-linguistics community rather than in psychology per se, where the notion of schemata went quickly out of fashion.

In music, the notion of the image schema received attention from the Society for Music Theory in a special session in its Autumn 1996 meeting.[31] This followed Susan McClary's favourable comments on Johnson's theory, arguing that it could provide the flexible, dualistic epistemology required by feminist criticism.[32] In his study of meaning in Beethoven's work, Robert Hatten also engaged with image schemata, Janna Saslaw applied image schemas in her examination of writing about music and specifically on Hugo Riemann's modulation theory, Echard William used image schemata to analyse Neil Young's 'Powderfinger', Allan Moore borrowed from the concept in his examination of popular song and, more recently, I have used image schemata to examine Milt Jackson's navigation on the vibraphone.[33] In essence all these studies have been very limited in their understanding of image schemata and in many cases proceeded to a mere application of Lakoff and Johnson's

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[30] Michael Kimmel, 'Culture Regained: Situated and Compoun Image Schemas', in *From Perception to Meaning: Image Schemas in Cognitive Linguistics*, ed. Beate Hampe, and Joseph E. Grady (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005), 299.

[31] Society for Music Theory, Program for the Nineteenth annual meeting' (Louisiana, 1996), 1-12. Available online https://societymusictheory.org/sites/default/files/SMT_program_1996.pdf. (accessed 27 October 2017).

[32] William Echard, 'An Analysis of Neil Young's "powderfinger" Based on Mark Johnson's Image Schemata', *Popular Music* 18, no. 1 (1999), 133-34. McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*, 23-25.

[33] Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University, 1994), 164. Janna Saslaw, 'Forces, Containers, and Paths: The Role of Body-Derived Image Schemas in the Conceptualization of Music', *Journal of Music Theory* 40, no. 2 (1996). Echard, 'An Analysis of Neil Young's "powderfinger" Based on Mark Johnson's Image Schemata'. Allan F. Moore, *Song Means: Analysing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song* (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2013). Gagatsis, 'Speaking the Sound'.

concept onto music. This is not to say that authors were uncritical of their own work, as Echard's honest conclusion testifies. For Echard, many of the applications of Johnson's schemata to music seem self-evident, and the author rightly identifies the danger of dressing up familiar structures in another jargon.[34] It is in fact the case that, although it is often advocated (as in Echard) that schemata may provide a way of breaking the mind-body dualism, such analysis eventually reduces complex phenomena to a simple textual interpretation. Instead, it becomes more and more evident that schema theory may be useful in interpreting music but is inadequate in providing a basis upon which we can make connections between ethnographic, critical and sonic material at a theoretical level; that this may be achieved only by synthesising sources. In the end, although each of these studies foregrounds distinct facets of the notion of image schemata, at the heart of their divergent emphasis is the lack of a 'converging evidence', as Beate Hampe notes, which is yet to be attained.[35]

Michael Kimmel recently proposed a method that examines image schemata considering cultural context. Kimmel's theory develops on two axes: first, he argues for a focus on image schemata that interact at the level of which they form compound *gestalts*. Second, he proposes an examination of 'situated image schemas', that will investigate how '"primitive image schemas" are actualised with regards to the kind of embodiment that they involve, as well as their intentional, emotional and motivational nature within specific settings, or their embedding within wider action scenarios and even a cultural ethos'.[36] He notes that we may only become fully aware of the cultural nature of image schemas through 'a situated and context-sensitive analysis of their usage'.[37] Kimmel's theory is problematic in that he does not clarify how the 'primitive image schemas' are formed: whether they are 'universal grammars' or whether they are situated schemas that, through a form of neural Darwinism, attain a grounding that allows them to evolve.[38] Although I share Kimmel's view of examining what is cultural about schemata, this problematic requires definition, for my purposes at the very least, given that up to this point I use schemata only as situated, culture-specific structures, rather than biologically founded, primitive, schemas.

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[34] Echard, 'An Analysis of Neil Young's "powderfinger" Based on Mark Johnson's Image Schemata', 143.

[35] Beate Hampe, 'Image Schemas in Cognitive Linguistics: Introduction', in *From Perception to Meaning: Image Schemas in Cognitive Linguistics* (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005), 4.

[36] Kimmel, 'Culture Regained', 285.

[37] Ibid., 286.

[38] Neural Darwinism advocates for lasting connections being strengthened because of being in the right places to be regularly used.

I take my cue from psychology and cognitive science, and refer to schemata to describe an organised pattern of thought or behaviour that organises the categories of information and the relationships among them. I refer to melodies that have functions or defining features that may specify relational attributes (e.g. harmonic or cultural, as I will explain) as schemata, whilst devices that are defined by their articulations, like the ones described in the previous chapter, I define as patterns.

5.4 Interlude: On the Defence of Schemata and Patterns Against Formulas

It has been widely suggested that improvisation relies on rearranging set patterns of thinking and previous experiences. In an unpublished manuscript, for example, Pressing noted that to improvise one recalls previous information and regroups this information to form something new. Pressing referred to schemas as referents. He noted that referents may form a knowledge base from which practising musicians can draw information to form something new and that schema theory explains why improvisations are always different, allowing improvisers to have their own identifiable sound.[39] Here I want to pause to identify a recurring problem in scholarship that refers to musical improvisation as aiming solely at creating something novel. The problem lies perhaps in the root of the word: in Latin, *improvisus* means unforeseen. The Oxford dictionary explains improvisation as a process of creating and performing something without preparation.[40] Although 'without preparation' does not exclude drawing from one's knowledge base; improvisation in music is the extemporaneous composition of music that conforms to stylistic norms. Still, improvisation is often misunderstood and perhaps one of the reasons it is considered as inferior to composition in the popular mind. George Lewis and Benjamin Piekut maintain that perspectives on improvisation 'appeared to draw implicitly upon an ideologically driven dialectic between improvisation and composition, reflecting widespread contention regarding not just the nature of improvisation, but its propriety as well'.[41] Furthermore, they argue that especially since the eighteen century, 'improvisation was compared with the practice of composition, with clear prejudices in favour of the latter's presumed advantages of unity and

[39] Jeff Pressing, 'Psychological Constraints on Improvisational Expertise and Communication', in *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, ed. Bruno Nettl, and Melinda Russell (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998).

[40] 'Improvisation', In *English Oxford Living Dictionaries* (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/improvisation) accessed 27 October 2017.

[41] George E. Lewis, and Benjamin Piekut, eds. *Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies, Volume 1* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 4.

coherence in musical utterance'.[42] Working from within the social sciences, Montuori explains that 'the kind of thinking that relegates improvisation to a lesser status operates within a disjunctive paradigm in which order is privileged over disorder, a paradigm of either/or, dichotomous thinking'.[43]

Montuori is right in identifying the specific problematic, but even so, this is not always the case in jazz. Thomas Brothers, in recently discovered copyrighted music for 'Cornet Chop Suey' that contains an early gem of a solo registered in 1924 but not recorded until 1926, shows that Louis Armstrong notated four of his breakthrough solos for copyright. Brothers argued that Armstrong worked out his solos again and again, and wrote ideas down to paper, dismissing the idea that Armstrong was a purely instinctive improvisational artist.[44] Jazz musicians do not aim at playing something entirely novel; the repetition of clichés, known patterns and quotes from other musical works highlight this. Rather, the aim is to create within a social and musical context, requiring both control and spontaneity, innovation and tradition, as well as conforming to constraints whilst recognising possibilities. Furthermore, as I have described earlier, creating music within a known structure that has a specific meaning is what defines one musical style from another. It would be impossible to recognise jazz as continuum of performance practices if everything were 'new'.

Montuori supported Pressing's theory, noting that musicians can improvise by rearranging the known schemata and remain novel in their ideas. The problem in such understandings, however, is that schemata refer to a mode of thinking: an abstraction that does not guarantee known articulation. On the contrary, patterns or formulas are the articulation of schemata; known structures that, in contrast to schemata, are defined by their articulation. Of course, the meaning and study of formulas takes on different meaning in different contexts. Parry and Lord understood formulas as a group of words 'which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea'. The authors argued that formulas are transmitted and used in performance, which singers can reorganise and craft tales of great lengths spontaneously. At the same time, Lord acknowledged that formulas are not the 'objectified clichés which they have the reputation of being, but that they are capable of change and are indeed frequently highly productive of

[42] Ibid.

[43] Montuori, 'The Complexity of Improvisation and the Improvisation of Complexity', 245.

[44] Thomas Brothers, *Louis Armstrong: Master of Modernism* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2014).

other and new formulas'.[45] In different contexts Leo Treitler used formulas to analyse Gregorian chants, Eugene Smith used formulas to analyse the compositions of Bill Evans, and Owens the music of Charlie Parker.[46]

Most relevant to this thesis, by identifying replicated patterns in his transcriptions of Parker's solos, Owens's analysis extracted characteristic phrase-types and grouped them according to resemblance and usage (such as key, chord-scale relationship). The similarities that I identify between Jackson's and Parker's improvisations would be impossible to make without Owens' work. I disagree, however, with the identification of some melodic segments as formulas, as for example an ascending arpeggio in triplets no matter how repetitive it may be. Similar analytical work in jazz has given the wrong impression among jazz scholars especially that jazz improvisation is made up solely of 'lego bricks' and that improvisers construct entire solos simply by drawing upon an extensive library of readily patterned material. Although this can be true on some occasions, it is only part of the picture and provides a very limited understanding of the creative processes that underlie a jazz performance. This approach does not articulate the musical knowledge that precedes the highlighted passages nor their cultural significance in their corresponding contexts and, eventually, these readings suffer from the defect of attempting to reduce complex phenomena to a collection of technical elements. In fact, Owens himself acknowledged that Parker's improvisations have a logic that extends beyond the mere application of melodic formulas at disparate harmonic scenarios. I trust that on these occasions Owens was referring to schemata.

5.5 Image Schemas and the Ways of the Body

So where do patterns and schemata come from? And how do they emerge in improvisations? The schemata and patterns used in jazz are emergent. They are knowledge structures that result from collective and/or repeated experiences and their action, affect, evaluation or thought, are complementary. They are not acquired through individual episodes that musicians encounter, but through features that overlap in different contexts over time. They are worked out again and again, through adjustments and refusal of adjustments, some which result out of necessity and transform depending on bodily experience; or, for example,

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[45] Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 4.

[46] Owens, 'Charlie Parker'; Owens, *Bebop*; Luke O. Gillespie, 'Literacy, Orality and Parry-Lord "formula": Improvisation and the Afro-American Jazz Tradition', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 22, no. 2 (1991). Smith, 'Homer, Gregory and Bill Evans? The Theory of Formulaic Composition in the Context of the Jazz Piano'.

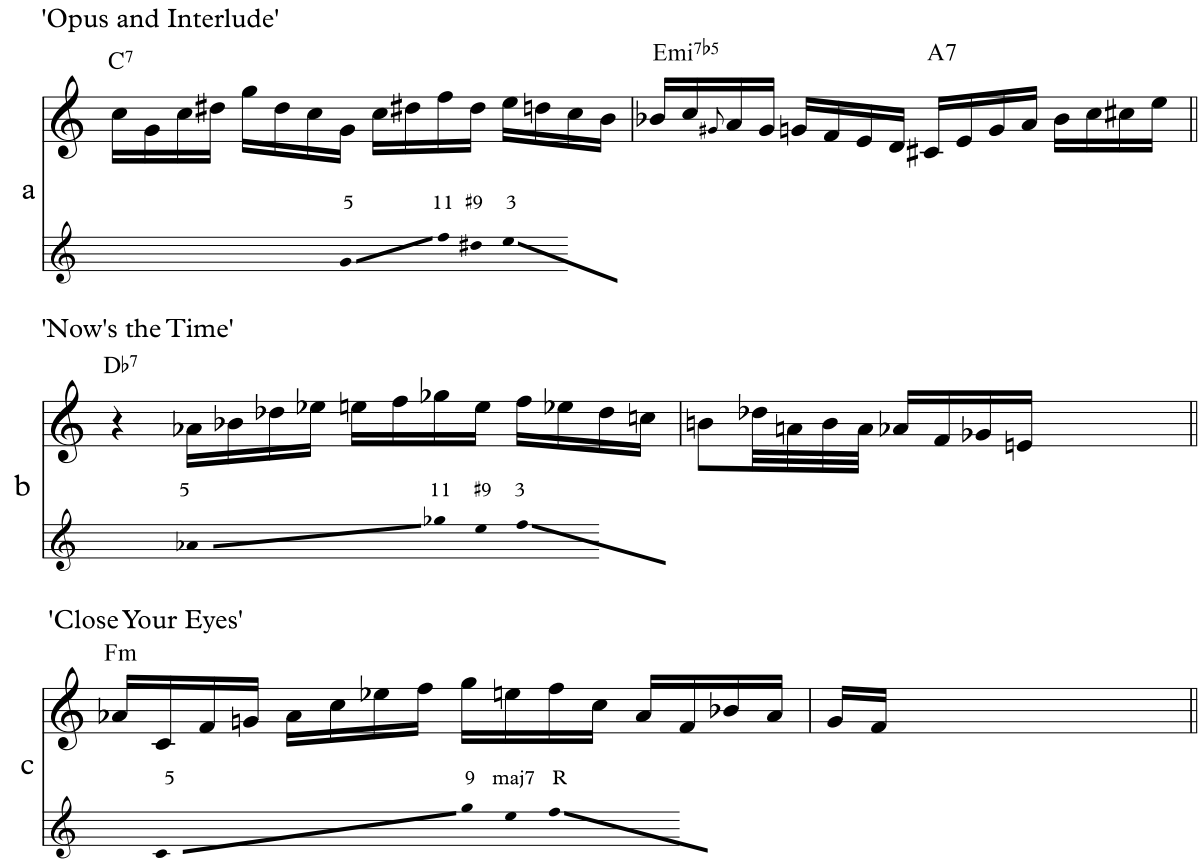
musical or social interaction between practitioners. This implies a collaborative and dialogical view of understanding between improvising jazz musicians in which knowledge is negotiated and passed back and forth until more concrete ideas are created. This is not to suggest an abstract and totalising realm of identical experiences shared across improvising musicians; but it is enough to suggest, following Wittgenstein, that 'family' resemblances between different bodies could lead to intersubjective agreements in body-related musical language.[47]

I have argued previously that while schemata and patterns may represent abstract concepts, some become more personal and may be tied to participants. In this section I want to examine one of Jackson's personified schema and explore one of the ways with which the vibist laboured some of those structures, how he employed the knowledge that was codified around him, and how he shaped it to meet his own aesthetic purposes and technical coordinates. In the two examples that follow I provide four extracts from Jackson's improvisation on 'Opus and Interlude' (from which I have quoted earlier), 'Now's the Time' and 'Close your Eyes' (Example 5-23). Although the lines occur within the context of different sequences and chord structures, the similarities can be observed by ear alone. Starting from the fifth degree—a common practice for Jackson—the first line (a) moves chromatically in order to land on an E, to anticipate the descending C dominant scale down to the third of an A7 chord, or perhaps to describe the third of the following dominant (C7) chord. Any possible explanation for this is viable here, even that of a mistake. In 'Now's the Time' (b), Jackson's line follows the exact same principles, whilst in (c) he constructs the line in a similar way to land on the tonic.[48]

[47] Echard, 'An Analysis of Neil Young's "powderfinger" Based on Mark Johnson's Image Schemata', 135. Over the past decades, researchers from a broad range of disciplinary traditions have agreed that human cognitive processes are shaped by bodily experiences, which in turn has led to a disciplinary perspective that has come to be called grounded cognition. See Lawrence W. Barsalou 'Grounded Cognition', *Annual Review of Psychology* 59 (2008): 617-45.

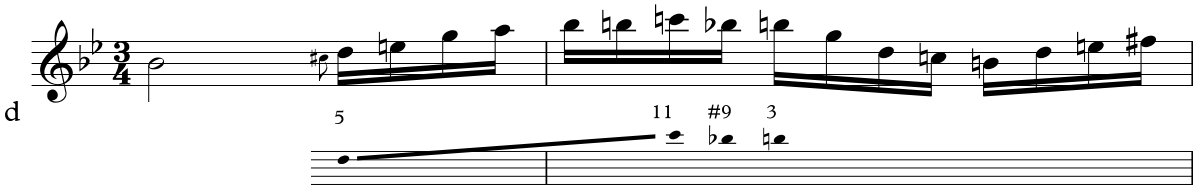
[48] Readers not familiar with conventional notation in jazz may find as odd the choice of numbering the intervals (an 11th leading to a #9th resolving to a 3rd and not a 10th.) I have chosen to notate the example in the specific way to be within the customary notation of chord extensions in jazz, which is why a #9th resolves to a 3rd and not a 10th.

Example 5-23. Excerpts of a common schema



The lines present recognised directional motion, energy and emphasis. To gain an impression of its affective import, it is necessary to have a feeling for the somatic gesture this structure conveys and the many possibilities it enacts at a given moment. The figuration above is a somatic event which I have come to recognise in several improvisations by Jackson. Listening to an improvisation, I know that it belongs to that familiar repertory of movement. My response to this melodic line, therefore, is subjected to my ability to 'feel' the shape crafted by Jackson. In the following example the improvised line maintains the same principles but this time it is generated over three beats in a bar (Example 5-24).

Example 5-24 Excerpt, 'Soul in 3/4'



The speed and confidence with which Jackson and practising musicians of his calibre created and performed such solos has long been a subject of marvel for the uninitiated. It is not that improvisations demonstrate the extensive knowledge base of those distinctive elements that organised the jazz style of the time, but that they highlight the ability to access this knowledge base and navigate it in real time. Jackson, as all improvising musicians of his calibre, was required not only to acquire this knowledge but also to develop fluency in its spontaneous use, in the heat of the moment when, as Czerny noted, 'reflection and attention are of scarcely any service in the matter'.[49] But the highlighted lines considered here hint at the elaboration of a similar invention, a strategy with which Jackson made his way through several harmonic contexts. Though the skill and invention remain impressive, such a stockpile of flexible designs would have a significant role in the rapid and secure crafting of spontaneous, yet complex, melodic lines. As Johnson-Laird puts it:

> Hand in hand with this development of the mental apprehension of combined sound, it is of importance, in playing from figures, to develop what may be called "brains in the fingers", namely, a quick and almost automatic response of the muscles to the mental impression derived through the eye; and no one need disdain to avail himself of any means by which this end may the more speedily be attained.[50]

I am not suggesting that Jackson built his lines by selecting and applying a number of appropriate devices to disparate harmonic scenarios, as Johnson-Laird's formulation may be interpreted. A closer look at the examples above do not indicate a stock of musical phrases employed in conventional sequences but rather a mode of musical thought. Memory might well be what evokes some of these melodic pathways, to aid the formation of a melodic line in certain contexts, while some of these pathways might surface unconsciously, in a recurring manner, or simply because they may feel physically comfortable.[51] In this respect, it is not impossible to separate the musical from the bodily in describing knowledge and action in improvisation: Vijay Iyer proposes that 'for musical performers, the difference between musical and human motion collapses to some degree; the rhythmic motions of the performer

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[49] Carl Czerny, *Letters to a Young Lady on the Art of Playing the Pianoforte, from the Earliest Rudiments to the Highest Stage of Cultivation, Vienna 1839*, trans. J.A. Hamilton (Firth, Pond and Co. New York, 1851), 74-77., cited in Berkowitz, *The Improvising Mind*, 16.

[50] P.N. Johnson-Laird, 'How Jazz Musicians Improvise', *Music Perception* 19(2002), 439.

[51] Comfort is an important point of consideration: Elizabeth LeGuin notes that, although as an artistic currency comfort has gone out of fashion, an older meaning of the word comes from the Latin *com + fortis* which means 'strengthening' Le Guin, *Boccherinis Body*, 9.

and the musical object overlap'.[52] The lines in examples 5-23 and 5-24, indicate the transposition of an expression into experience; a mode of musical thought that is either the direct product of physical experience or the recasting of a schema as movement.

Specifically, the structural elements of the schema include: (1) a starting point, (2) a destination or end, (3) a path or sequence of contiguous locations that connect the source and destination. It is through such structural logic that the schema gains force as an agent of organisation.[53] Taking on this source-path-goal schema, the basic logic is that, in proceeding from a source to a destination along the path, one must navigate through specific points. In this example, the fifth degree of the scale is the starting point, the 3rd the destination, whilst the 4th and raised 2nd scale degrees are the path. A schema such as the one I have identified in earlier chapters on the related diminished is fundamentally metaphorical in nature and acts as an agent of organisation given that it was shared musical knowledge. This personified schema, however, is metaphorical only to those who shared an understanding of Jackson's performance strategies.

This schema seems to comprise an important building block of cognition for Jackson's improvisations, regardless of how the inner parts of the melody will combine in real time. Consequently is fair to treat this schema as a structure of cognitive competence entrenched in long-term memory. Richard Schmidt developed a schema theory to account for the learning of such movements, what are often called 'motor skills'. He described motor learning as 'a set of (internal) processes associated with practice or experience leading to relatively permanent changes in the capability for responding.'[54] Schmidt viewed motor schemata as a set of rules, formed by abstracting information from related movement experiences over many practised repetitions, and proposed that the schema is formed from the relationships between the elements that are crucial for its completion. He argued that instead of learning specifically programmed movements (such as pathways as proposed by Sudnow, which I have explained earlier in this thesis, or formulas by Owens), people learn generalised motor programs or schemata. They do so by learning the relationships between the various parameters of a movement and its outcomes. In this respect, Schmidt proposed

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[52] Vijay Iyer, 'Embodied Mind, Situated Cognition and Expressive Micro-Timing in African-American Music', *Music Perception* 9, no. 3 (2002), 395.

[53] There are similarities between my characterisation of image schemata and Janna Saslaw's. For more information see: Saslaw, 'Forces, Containers, and Paths: The Role of Body-Derived Image Schemas in the Conceptualization of Music', 220.

[54] Richard A Schmidt, *Motor Control and Learning: A Behavioural Emphasis* (Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1988), 346.

two different memory systems: the recall schema and the recognition schema; both of which need to be established through physical experience. The first relates to outcomes with regards to the parameters that define a movement (for example melodic trajectories, movement duration). The second relates the expected sensory consequences of a movement to the movement's outcome. The recognition schema acts as an internal reference point of comparison between the imaginary and actual outcome. Similarly, a generalised motor program contains necessary instructions for the execution of a movement but must adapt according to the changing situations; it therefore needs response specifications.

To examine how such schemata form and emerge in Jackson's improvisations, it is also necessary to consider Jackson's photographic memory along with his choice of instrument. The vibraphone allows no kinaesthetic feedback and most of the time requires from the performer to maintain visual contact with the keys. This was a point of discussion during my interview with vibraphonist Joe Locke, during which he also noted the need to maintain visual contact with the instrument. The ways in which Jackson moved on his instrument, therefore, were highly influenced by the visual and auditory systems (here it is worth noting that Jackson also had perfect pitch). In the extracts analysed above we see how the improvised melodies are reduced to a fundamental four-note-movement and essentially to a rather flexible and efficient sequence. Against this perspective, we need to explore the relationship between sensory experience and schemata and, in the pursuit of these matters, more immediately helpful to me has been the notion of the image schema as developed in the embodied cognition thesis.[55] Mark Johnson maintained that embodied experience gives shape to image schemas within the conceptual system, whilst Vyvyan Evans and Melanie Green explain that 'Image schemas derive from sensory and perceptual experience as we interact with and move about in the world'.[56] They note that image schemas are not rich or detailed concepts, but rather abstract concepts consisting of patterns emerging from repeated instances of embodied experience.[57] For now, I would note that image schemas are knowledge structures that have formed with reference to specific physical experience.

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[55] The image (or embodied) schema is closely associated with the development of the embodied cognition thesis proposed by early researchers in cognitive semantics (notably George Lakoff and Mark Johnson), and has become highly influential in the neighbouring areas of cognitive and developmental psychology (cited in Evans and Green, Vyvyan Evans and Melanie Green, *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

[56] Ibid. It must be noted that, especially in this scenario the fact that 'image' has something to do with 'visual' is misleading.

[57] Ibid., 179.

Discussion of all this in connection with music would inevitably be tricky. I do not wish to endorse a division between these concepts and the creative process in jazz, so I will offer some thoughts on how the schema in the previous example may have formulated. The fact that Jackson began the lines from the fifth degree of the corresponding scale may already be explored in several different ways. Is it embodiment subjected to existing schemata and shared knowledge? Or is the fifth more of an activation pattern that is tied to the instrument? The topology of the vibraphone is crucial in this consideration: players are required to begin lines with a certain hand to stick suitably (for example perform double strokes: to perform continuous notes with the same hand), to avoid crossing hands where possible.[58] This is central to this specific schema given that Jackson enclosed his target notes in a particular way. Jackson was left-handed, so starting his lines from the fifth degree may have been a strategy that he worked out over time to ensure that he would land on a desired pitch, at a desired moment and with the required bodily position. It is through such interplay of corporeality and abstraction that cultural knowledge gains, as schemata, conviction and force.[59] Following this brief consideration I want to build on Beate Hampe's condensed characterisation of Lakoff's and Johnson's original conception to offer some underlying principles of image schemata as they emerge in Jackson's improvisation:

> 1. Image schemas are directly meaningful (experiential/embodied), structures, which arise from, or are grounded in, recurrent bodily movements through space, perceptual interactions, and ways of manipulating objects.
> 2. Image schemas are highly schematic *gestalts* which capture the structural contours of sensory-motor experience, integrating information from multiple modalities and across diverse experiential concepts.
> 3. Image schemas are both internally structured and highly flexible. This flexibility manifests in the numerous transformations that schemata undergo.[60]

As Hampe notes, neither the original characterization nor subsequent research have provided the cognitive-linguistic community with a set of clear-cut criteria to separate image-schematic representations from other basic schematic concepts.[61] Equally, I do not wish to

[58] Sticking refers to the performer's choice of mallet to strike the note on the clavier. It is the equivalent of deciding the placement of fingers on the piano, or of bowing on a string instrument.

[59] Deidre, 'Can Bodylore Be Brought to Its Senses?', 13.

[60] Hampe, 'Image Schemas in Cognitive Linguistics: Introduction'.

[61] Ibid., 3.

endorse a theory that will advance the image-schema premise to improvising musicians broadly, or maintain a 'universalistic' conception of the mind that will obscure the socio-cultural dimensions of human cognition. Rather, the image schema, as proposed in the previous example, is a manifestation of situated embodiment, which is tied to culture-specific, affect-laden experience that is defined by body practices, and the specific needs of improvising musicians at a given moment. I understand the image schema as an abstraction that seems to best describe the development and application of this flexible structure by Jackson as it emerges in his music, whilst maintaining an approach that considers both an expression of universal principles at work in individual cognition, as well as properties of an underlying cultural view.

6 GESTURE IN JAZZ: AN INFLECTED PERFORMANCE

The kind of analysis that I am concerned with up to this point is, of course, insufficient when accounting for music's complex social mediation. Even after tagging each of these separate stylistic traits to a more symbolic articulation of the shared musical knowledge of the time and any semiotic meanings these might reveal, the analysis has not captured the quality of emotion the music evokes, one that is generated by the character of the movement itself and its gestural shaping. Unlike early musical excursions of the 1940s, Jackson's music was by the 1950s evoking something bigger than the metaphorical meanings I have hitherto explored, and a depth of emotion enhanced by the interpolated expansion of the phrase leading to a climatic reversal ('Opus and Interlude' being a striking example). The purpose of this chapter is to explore more fully those elements of melodic signification that could be described using terms of gesture, perceived bodily motion or other modes of performance rhetoric. To do so, I take my cue from my analysis of Jackson's solo in 'Opus and Interlude' and later his performance of 'Close your Eyes'. A quick glance of the exposition of the theme 'Close your Eyes' shows it to be composed of the very elements I have treated in the previous sections; yet, certain qualities of the performance itself appear to trigger a deeper response. The difference lies in that the synthesis of Jackson's solo in 'Close your Eyes' and its continuity are not the result of a mere sequence of enchained pitches and rhythms. Instead it demonstrates an emergent expressive interpretation far richer than is inclusive in the textural devices. This expressivity—or synthetic gestalt, as Robert Hatten has labelled it—will be central to my study of musical gesture in Jackson's improvisations.[1]

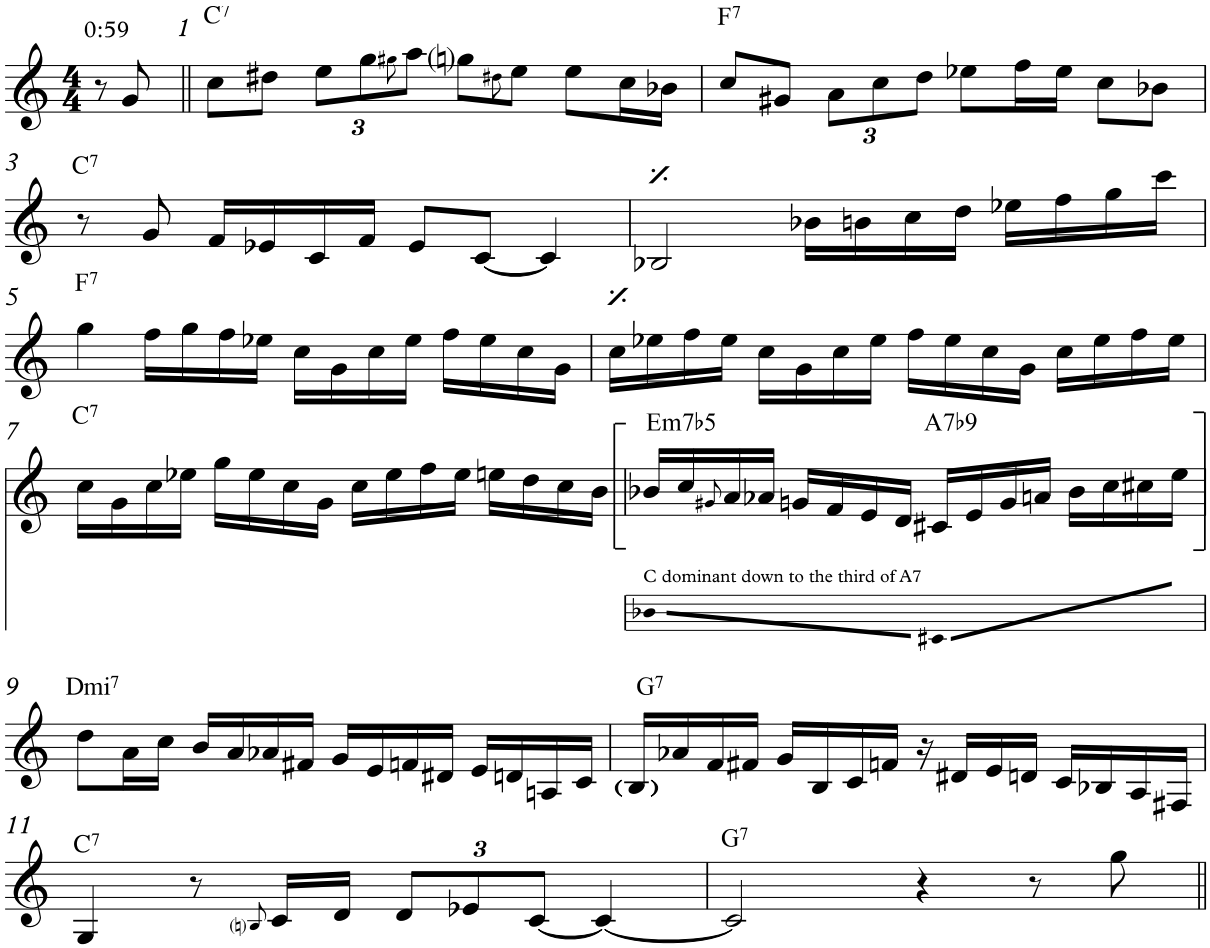
6.1 Developments in Sound

The stylistic diversity in Jackson's first decade of recording shows that the vibist, as part of a community that was deeply engaged in stylistic innovation from the time he joined Gillespie in 1945, was constantly evolving, adding to the musical language he learned during his apprenticeship with the core practitioners of this music. Within this context, he developed his sense of melodic construction (whether improvisations or statements of composed melodies) by means of rhythmic complexity and free phrasing—at times unconfined by the need to outline it metrically—and, eventually, by his innovations in sound. Well over a decade after

[1] Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 112.

Jackson left Detroit to join Gillespie's group, his solo on 'Opus and Interlude' demonstrates these developments. The solo includes many of the qualities that I have discussed so far, such as his use of the C dominant scale descending to the third of A7 in bar eight, as well as the related diminished (Example 6-1). Furthermore, the structurally balanced lines Jackson played in 'Anthropology' almost a decade earlier here give way to more irregularly shaped phrases. Jackson's double-time playing evidences some of the most challenging performance practices of bebop and identified him as a musician of the new jazz order; mastery of the rhythmic approach of bebop, Ramsey notes, 'united musicians under the bebop flag and became how they "represented" —to borrow a term from modern hip-hop parlance—their social affiliation with an avant-garde cultural movement.'[2]

Example 6-1 Excerpt, 'Opus and Interlude', first chorus



[2] Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 133. For more information on bebop's rhythmic demands see: Ibid., 133-34.

In the 1950s Jackson's music reached its definitive physiognomy. Jackson reached the maturity and artistry for which he was celebrated and his work represented perhaps the most important single innovation in the instrument's history. In 'Opus and Interlude', Jackson's rhythmic approach is coupled with a more salient change in his vibraphone technique as he scaled back the attack on the vibraphone to play with a lyricism that remains unchallenged. To perform such legato lines requires an unsurpassed command of the vibraphone, a musical feature that Jackson developed throughout his life. This development was by and large responsible for elevating the status of the vibraphone from novelty instrument to one that commanded respect. As Neil Tesser comments:

> Jackson slowed the vibrato and, more important, scaled back the percussive attack and on-the-beat phrasing that often made the vibes sound cartoonish; instead he offered a slow flowing, relaxed style that took its cue from contemporaneous horn-men rather than pianists and drummers. His lines breathed, lyrically and almost vocally; they sometimes whispered and sighed.[3]

We see in this formulation how Jackson's sound was experienced as carrying connotations and qualities intimated in voice. Many similar descriptions have been offered to capture the essence of his sound: 'limpid, ethereal and at times almost disembodied', André Hodeir said on one occasion; the vibist has the power to 'make us forget the impact of the mallet on the bars, to absorb it completely' on another.[4] Palmer also expressed his delight at Jackson's 'rich, quavering tone'.[5] Owens noted that Jackson's long notes have a beautiful, subtle motion instead of the nervous shimmy that was the norm on the vibraphone.[6] Similarly, Mattingly commented that 'The more subtle vibrato added warmth to Jackson's long tones and generally made the instrument less nervous sounding'.[7] Singer-songwriter Jimmy Jones nicknamed Jackson 'the steel bender', commenting that no one could bend metal like that.[8] After an unaccompanied concert at Symphony Space in 1979, a converted movie house located at 95th Street and Broadway in New York, reviewer Richard M. Sudhalter commented that Jackson's 'unique sound, cut-glass iridescence poised, ethereal, on

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[3] Tesser, 'The New Electric Guitar and Vibraphone in Jazz', 651.

[4] Hodeir, 'Bag's Microgroove', 152.

[5] The phrase here is attributed to Whitney Balliett, coined during a concert. Palmer, 'Milt Jackson Revisited Part I', 9.

[6] Owens, *Bebop*, 198.

[7] Mattingly, '1996 PAS Hall of Fame', 15.

[8] McPartland, 'Milt Jackson on Piano Jazz', (1991): http://www.npr.org/2013/01/07/168786059/milt-jackson-on-piano-jazz (accessed 25 August 2017).

a slow motion vibrato, summoned visions of sunlit glens and half-remembered summer afternoons'.[9]

Comments about Jackson's sound were freely mixed alongside qualities heard as intrinsic to a composition and his personal style. An important characteristic of evaluative response is that, within a musical community such as that defined by the readership of the journals from which I have quoted up to this point, reference to subjective qualities as belonging to sounds were in some way perfectly intelligible. In these terms, an ability to discriminate between performances that succeed in conveying a subjective character from those that fail was also a common achievement of the critics: we see on many occasions comparisons of Lewis' improvisations and those of Parker's or Jackson's that favour the spirited responses of the latter. Creating a beautiful tone through a well-balanced physical adjustment to the instrument was central to Jackson's forming a sonic signature in the jazz scene.[10] His forming of 'gesture' in the shaping of a melodic line (or a listener perceiving this musical moment as gesture), was the result of a developed practice in which the expressive shaping of human movement was heard in sound, even without the reinforcement of visual cues. Jackson's sonic signature was conceived as a creation that came into being with sound, creating an illusion (a sonic one), responsible for the construction of his identity. The impression of the 'personality' was gained subliminally through the markers in sound of what seemed to be Jackson's characteristics responses.

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[9] Richard M. Richard M Sudhalter, 'Milt Jackson Fills the Space with Modern Jazz', *New York Post*, 13 March 1979.

[10] Current research has begun to address whether jazz styles can be determined solely by stylistic differences. For example, the *Jazzomat Research Project*— situated at the intersection between jazz research and computational which aims, among others, for music information retrieval (MIR), examines 456 transcriptions of monophonic jazz improvisations (the Weimar Jazz Database) with the aid of software toolkit (MeloSpuSuite/GUI). This allows researchers to retrieve valuable information regarding the repetition of pitches, patterns, rhythm etc, in jazz improvisations. Following their study, Martin Pfleiderer and Jacob Abeβer maintain that, based on statistical analysis, it is difficult to argue that jazz styles are determined by the replication of stylistic devices. Their research reveals no statistical differences between solos labelled as bebop, cool jazz, etc. They conclude that the uniqueness of a personal sound is not found in the stylistic features extracted in their study but in more complex higher-level melodic features such as sound, micro-rhythmic strategies, timbre or attack, etc. This latter observation emphasises my comment about Jackson's sonic signature. I find, however, necessary to comment that, as I have demonstrated in the previous chapters, patterns are not the solely stylistic devices important in determining jazz styles. Schemata are, one may argue, more important as they represent what is cultural about such devices. These problematics highlight, one more, the necessity for practicing scholars to be engaged in such research because the flexible designs of schemata require expertise in the musical language to be recognised which, at this stage, software development— and I need to stress that my understanding is dictated only by my own competencies in the subject—is yet to reach the technological advancement for recognising such devices. See Martin Pfleiderer and Jacob Abeβer, 'Statistical Feature Selection: Searching for Musical Style', in *Inside the Jazzomat: New Perspectives for Jazz Research*, ed. Pfleiderer, Martin, *et al.* (Mainz: Schott, 2017), 87-88.

The slow speed of the oscillator on Jackson's instrument was an important component in this development. Owens notes that Jackson used his oscillator at about 3.3 revolutions per second, instead of the 10-rps used by Hampton. [11] Jackson explained this development was the product of search and experimentation and a direct influence from his work as a singer. 'I discovered that by using the speed control on the vibes, I could imitate the vibrato I used as a vocalist', he noted.[12] In fact, Jackson related his playing to singing countless times. On another occasion, for example, he clarified that 'the vibrato comes from the voice. It was just a question of exploring and finding the sound I wanted'.[13] He also observed that the vibrato on his sound came from the fact that he approached the instrument both as a horn player and as a singer.[14] Pressed on this point in an interview with Robert Rusch Jackson recalled that

> It [the vibraphone] had the electric speed control, and it took me a long time to figure out the correct sound and how to get it how I wanted it. Now the sound also comes from the fact when I was singing back in '39 and '40. The vibrato with the instrument is the type of sound I use for my voice. In playing a ballad for example, the sound on the instruments is the same way I should always visualise myself as a vocalist.[15]

When another interviewer commented that his sound had a horn-like quality, Jackson simply replied 'it sings' and on this premise, went on to distance himself from Lionel Hampton, who was known for his percussive sound and more clearly articulated swing phrasing. Jackson can be seen on numerous audio-visual footage to adjust the speed control, especially in endings. In an interview for National Public Radio, he explained that 'You know when you are playing you breath the same way you do when you're singing. That's why you have to stop when you play a phrase or a note and you stop just like you would if you were singing, and you breathe in between'.[16]

Jackson also took the opportunity to relate this progress to the design and manufacture of the instrument, together with his own efforts. He praised the fact that the instrument was made with pre-war material, implying better quality and specifically referring to the alloys

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[11] Owens, *Bebop*, 198.

[12] Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 301. In Dawkins' interview with Jackson there is some fascinating audio-visual footage in which Jackson explains the differences with the vibrato as well as his sticking on the instrument. Arthur Dawkins, 'Howard University Jazz Oral History Project: Milt Jackson', (1984): http://library.howard.edu/Jazz/miltjackson (accessed 11 December 2017).

[13] Danson, 'Milt Jackson', 4.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Rusch, 'Milt Jackson', 46.

[16] Quoted in Roulet, 'Milt Jackson', 29.

with which the keys were built.[17] In his pursuit for a more expressive sound, the vibist also experimented with his use and make of mallets. He used mallets handmade by Fred Albright, and later by Albright's granddaughter. Jackson noted that

> It's the core of the mallet that makes the difference. Everybody asks me 'Man how do you get that sound with the mallet?' With most mallets you get a tinny or clunky type of sound on the instrument. I always try to get as full as sound as possible. I went up to Fred's house many a day and bugged him to death trying to figure out how to make a mallet that I wanted, and he finally came up with it. One clue is the larger head on the mallet, the better the sound you can get. But if you get too big, the sound is too soft. Don't forget that the way you strike the instrument has a lot to do with the sound you get.[18]

Roulet went as far as to suggest that two versions of the standard 'I've Lost Your Love' (June 1954 and November 1955)—the latter featuring Jackson as a singer—serve as good examples to compare the vibrato used by Jackson in both his playing and singing.[19]

But what do we mean exactly when we hear the vibraphone as 'singing'? Attempts at analysing problems of musical expression or signification often stumble due to our inability to define this representation. And yet, descriptions of instrumental playing as 'singing' or 'voice' were modified in various ways and were quite common. These descriptions give a signifying ability to Jackson's sound, comparable to that of expressive tones of the human voice. However, there is no physically distinct 'object' to which the characterisation refers; rather, the 'singing' or 'warmth' is in the sound itself. On hearing a certain 'vocality' in Jackson's music, we hear properties of singing as belonging to them. It is not, however, an imagined object to which 'singing' refers but a quality that is perceived in the sound. In this case, 'warmth' is being picked out by the metaphoric description: the problem in this case occurs due to a difference in language and music in the way that they convey an object of thought. Indeed, such terms are applied when talking about music in many ways and are unrestricted by one manifestation. They invite us to pay a closer attention to their own phenomenology, drawing listeners into the qualities of a sign.

Jackson's 'play' with the vibrato of his instrument was not new to jazz. It was quite common to saxophone players to experiment with their use of vibrato, as for example Owens has remarked about Parker: 'His vibrato also departed from the swing-era norm; he used a narrower pitch range (about 120 cents) and a slower speed (about five oscillations per second,

[17] Rusch, 'Milt Jackson', 46.

[18] Samuels, 'Milt Jackson Interview', 12-13.

[19] Roulet, 'Milt Jackson', 27.

compared with about six per second for most of his predecessors).'[20] Reducing the vibrato was in fact a trade mark of bebop music and a direct influence of Lester Young on the idiom.[21] Taking this into consideration, Jackson's sound becomes a place to look not only for evidence of the subjective qualities but also of his formation through signs. He emerges, once more, as a complex expressive manifestation introduced through the play of signs at many levels. In this respect, a question inevitably arises: what role in musical signification is played by general ideas inherited from participation in musical culture and society? Cumming describes such issues as 'semiotic interpretants': ideas that allow 'a connection to be made between a sound and its particular inflection on "vocality" within a given musical group'.[22] If Jackson's sound is understood as having 'warmth', it may be due to the connection of his interpretation to saxophone players and therefore the ideas that are established within a community with regards to the latter. In sum, the quality of the sound has some sort of 'sign' that goes beyond its reception as acoustic fact and allows connections to be made with ideas developed in a community.

6.1.1 'Close Your Eyes': A Case Study

The scope and reach of Jackson's development is perhaps best documented in a collaboration with one of his favourite colleagues, Coleman Hawkins, on the record *Bean Bags*. 'Next to Bird, I admire Hawk more than any musician I have known', Jackson said referring to Hawkins. 'It's not the music alone, he has one of the greatest philosophies in life'.[23] I continue by examining the first section of Jackson's solo in 'Close Your Eyes' (from *Bean Bags*), to highlight a strategy that began to occupy Jackson's playing in the 1950s and constituted perhaps his most prominent performance rhetoric (Example 6-2). In 'Close Your Eyes', the collaboration on the exposition of the theme testifies to the delicacy of both Hawkins's and Jackson's imagination. The range of material here has swing and bebop in its core, yet extends its lessons and implications as 'Bean' and 'Bags' create music that is steeped in the traditions of bebop but more spacious than their pioneering forties

[20] Owens, *Bebop*, 29.

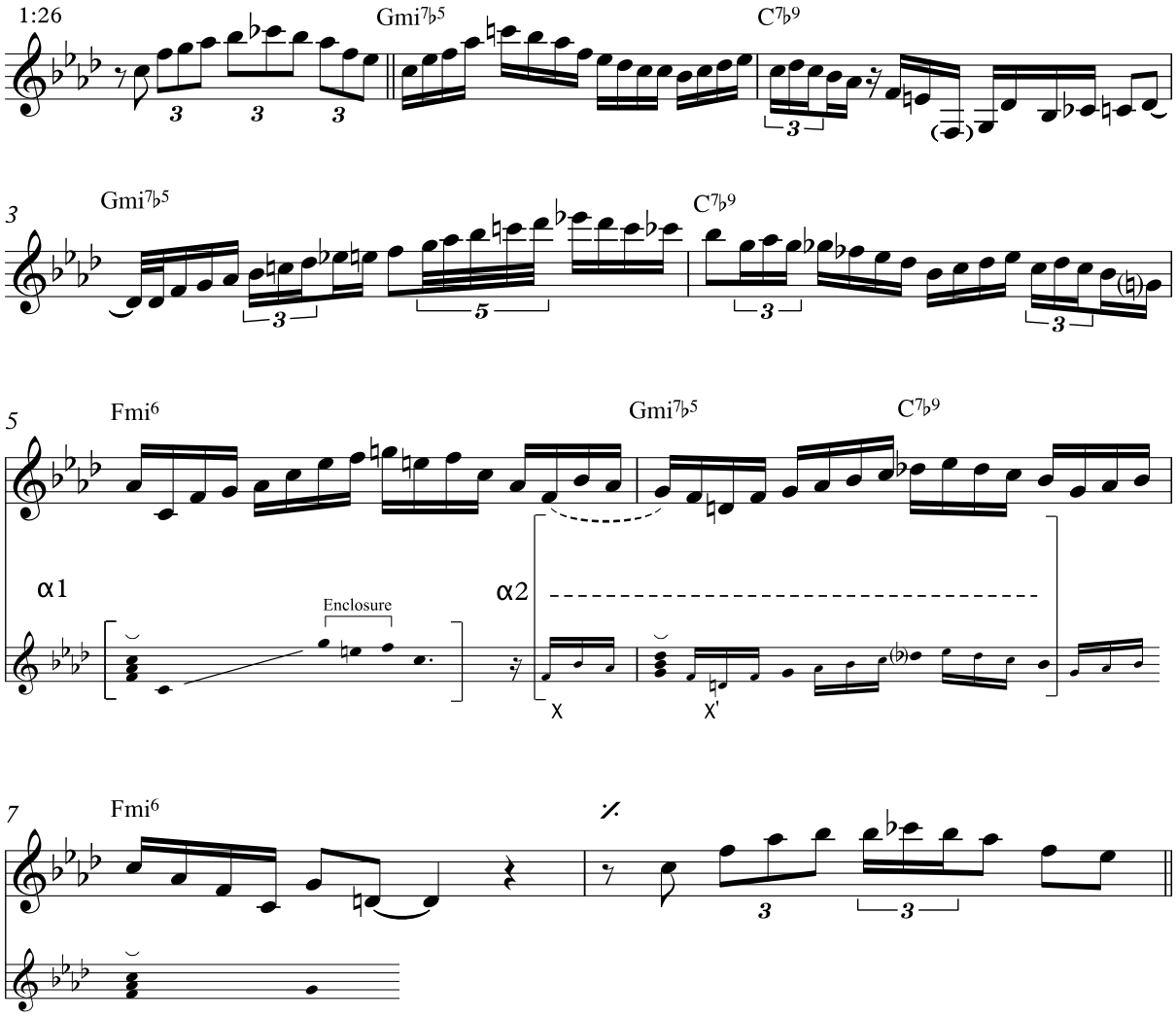
[21] Equally, Owens notes that Young was influenced by Frank Trumbauer's slower vibrato. Ibid., 6.

[22] Naomi Cumming, *The Sonic Self: Musical Subjectivity and Signification* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 75.

[23] Morgenstern, 'Bags Groove', 17.

excursions.[24] The quietly thrilling dialogue between the vibes and the sax is subtler and more far-reaching than the cruder ethos in earlier efforts.

Example 6-2. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Close Your Eyes', mm. 1–8



[24] Jackson's and Hawkins' coexistence here presents significant differences with what one hears on *Bean and the Boys*, an earlier collaboration between the two (Coleman Hawkins - *Bean and The Boys*, NYC, December 1946). For example, in 'Cocktails for Two', Jackson has a penchant for compressing sonic information and lays down broken arpeggiated figures. This practice was commonly heard among the vibists of the era. Jackson added to the exposition of the theme and a further layer of sound for Hawkins to play on. And yet 'Jackson seldom makes the mistakes of so many vibraphonists—I have Hampton in mind, especially—whose instrument seems to induce them, for no apparent reason, to break the chord down to endless series of arpeggios', Hodeir commented on a later occasion. Hodeir, 'Bag's Microgroove', 154. Jackson adopts a similar strategy in 'Stardust' behind Sonny Stitt's exposition of the theme. Milt Jackson and Sonny Stitt, *In the Beginning*, Detroit, MI, April 1948.

For Jackson, the melody was always the most important element of his music, a characteristic which he noted to have learned from Parker, Gillespie and Young. 'Always learn the correct melody and what was composed first, then improvise', he noted.[25] He took the opportunity to distance himself from other jazz musicians whose recording practices included learning something thirty minutes before the studio session which documented it. He also explained that he enjoyed learning a piece well before performing it to reach a better understanding of it. For Jackson, this way musicians could better communicate the music to their audiences.[26]

Jackson disguises the melody in a fanfare of short and long phrases to create a vivid rhythmic contour with accents underlining the directional changes, producing a heightened feel of unpredictability and drawing his listeners straight into an auditory challenge of asymmetrical upheaval. His melodic runs, the casual use of larger intervals and intervallic leaps make the melody sound angular and fresh, imparting to it an active and inviting character. Once the theme is stated and 'the Jackson mood' (as Hodeir liked to say) is established, Jackson deploys rhythm in flexible and dynamic ways. The vibist creates a line that is thoroughly conjunct and, without sacrificing the inexorable momentum of his musical shapes, invites us to a listening experience of precariously mounting complexity. The chorus blossoms forth as the improvised melody is linearly developed, at times thematically through polyrhythmic figures and phrases of variable length that undermine the modular phrase structure of its model. Jackson's play with the phrase structure here constitutes another point of variety as he 'plays through' some sections of the song and pauses on others, exploiting the tension and release.[27] He skilfully combines opposing gestures created by a musical overlap, achieved partly because of his characteristic phrasing.

The ways with which Jackson's melodic runs are linked seamlessly are in many ways his most potent contribution to both jazz and the instrument. To analyse his music at this level is to investigate the changing distribution of grains in each layer and explore how these interact when superimposed to create larger scale musical shapes. The discrete arpeggios and melodic runs that he performs are broken out and developed, often in forms of counterstatements. It is not a virtuosic display for decorative purposes but a musical gesture, one centred on the structure of his solo. There are no small-scale events as such, no matter

[25] My transcription of Jackson's interview with Marian McPartland: McPartland, 'Milt Jackson on Piano Jazz', (1991): http://www.npr.org/2013/01/07/168786059/milt-jackson-on-piano-jazz (accessed 25 August 2017).
[26] Ibid.
[27] Hodeir has pointed this practice in Jackson's soloing and Ramsey has remarked similarly for Bud Powell. Hodeir, 'Bag's Microgroove', 152-156; Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 22.

how meaningfully notated or analysed discretely; rather, the music is about the evolution of his solo as a rich gesture developed over the entire period of his performance. One of his performance strategies constitutes these exaggerated ascending and descending runs, which in the past were confined to triplet or semiquaver leaps, but now are executed as irregularly shaped phrases—blocks of sound—and impart a propulsive forward motion leading to melodic peaks. It is through the formation of these ceaselessly varied and amplified melodic segments, whose changeable yet fluent sequence seems to owe so little to any preconceived formal outlines, that Jackson's virtuosic bravado meets his astute musicianship head on. It is the insertion of one melody, the interplay with an idea and its exposition; when Jackson 'is flipping the melody around' (to use a more jazz located terminology). It is the moment when he echoes the blues and its rhetorical past, while at the same time making his playing sound so fresh. This mode of unfolding events creates a propulsive and highly dramatic discourse, culminating in a continuous wave of intensity.

6.2 Forward Motion

Medium-slow tempo songs (such as 'Close Your Eyes'), along with ballads, became widely recognised as Jackson's most captivating area of production; 'the tempo has often enabled Bags not only to reach the peak of his talent but to rise head and shoulders above any other vibraphonist', Hodeir noted.[28] Regardless of the descriptive beautification that is attributed to Jackson's improvisations, his melodic lines surface in the most startling and exhilarating combinations, inviting us into a powerful listening experience. It is an experience that, as Bettina Varwig has so gracefully put it—in terms equally applicable to Jackson's music—'threatens to trip over itself and fall apart, before being channelled into an affirmative re-collection of forces and ideas'.[29] Jackson's musical craftsmanship is evident through the seamless emergence of playful, yet compelling, melodic lines which, in a momentary flash are saturated with an overlapping of components and steered into unexpected transformations. Perhaps the boldest of his performance strategies is the perpetual flow with which Jackson sets his melodies in motion; essentially the art of delivering his musical oration.[30] It is, simply put, a poetic and potent force. Aside from the technical particularities

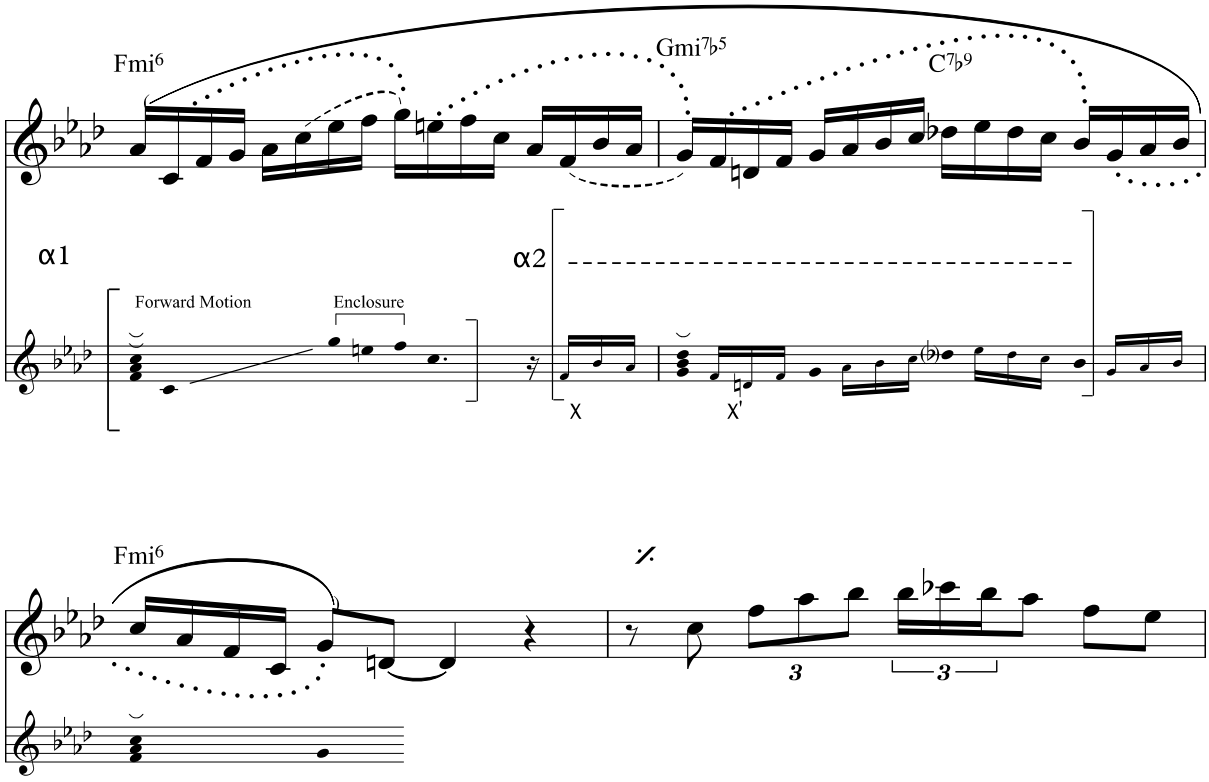
[28] Hodeir, 'Bag's Microgroove', 155.

[29] Bettina Varwig, ‚One More Time: J.S. Bach and Seventeenth-century Traditions of Rhetoric', *Eighteenth-Century Music* 5 (02), no. 02 (2008): 192.

[30] Writers have for many years described music as motion. For a review see Lee Rothfarb, 'Energetics', In *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, edited by Thomas Christensen, 927–955, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

that Jackson's solo presents, his melodic lines invite further investigation. We see for example how the success of his performances in conveying individual expression depended on the degree to which a melodic line had been crafted, not only as technical movement but as expressive shaping. As the dotted slurs show, Jackson's melodies display a certain forward motion, and his phrasing moves forward to a principal accent (Example 6-3). A closer look reveals that these consist of four consecutive notes grouped in such a way that the first is detached from what follows, and instead sounds as part of the group that lead it there (a fact suggestive a natural harmonic hearing, most notably 'tension and release').[31]

Example 6-3 Forward motion, 'Close Your Eyes', mm. 1-8
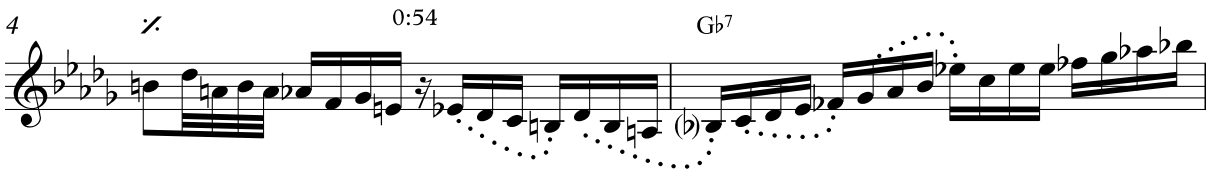


Starting from the third degree, in bar five, Jackson pivots on an F minor chord, tied with an arpeggiated movement that includes the minor seventh interval targeting the note G. A chromatic approach from below lands on (and leads to) the tonic (F), at which point, however, he has already began targeting the third at beat four. Although at first sight the highlighted passages (α1 & α2) present differences, they are similar in design. In α2, the line consists of four movements, each one a reflection of the other. An upwards melodic leap is

[31] Larson has discussed the importance of 'rhythmic gravity' and 'rhythmic magnetism' and illuminates several aspects of rhythm and metre. See Larson, *Music Forces*, 136-179.

reflected downwards targeting a G, while an ascending scalar movement is followed by a descending one to land on the seventh degree of the dominant chord here. χ' is a mirror of χ, although it elegantly resorts to a D instead of a C, and a reasonable facsimile of the harmonic function. This adjustment, however, can once more be the result of multiple factors: artistic whimsy, desire for variation, targeting the fifth degree of the chord, from the need to replace the result of a faulty transformation, or simply an intuitive response to the constraints of the song. In truth, these possible interpretations draw out different features of the melodic segments as signs more complex than a mere single sound quality. In its macrostructure, the improvised melody links together segments similar in design to that of α1 and α2, although none is repeated. And in its capacity to create a haptic image, Jackson realises a unique musical event through the indexing of his activity in dynamic changes and emphasis. One may rehear the line in forward motion in smaller segments (some of which are indicated by the dashed slur), in longer segments or as one connected phrase (indicated by a phrase mark).

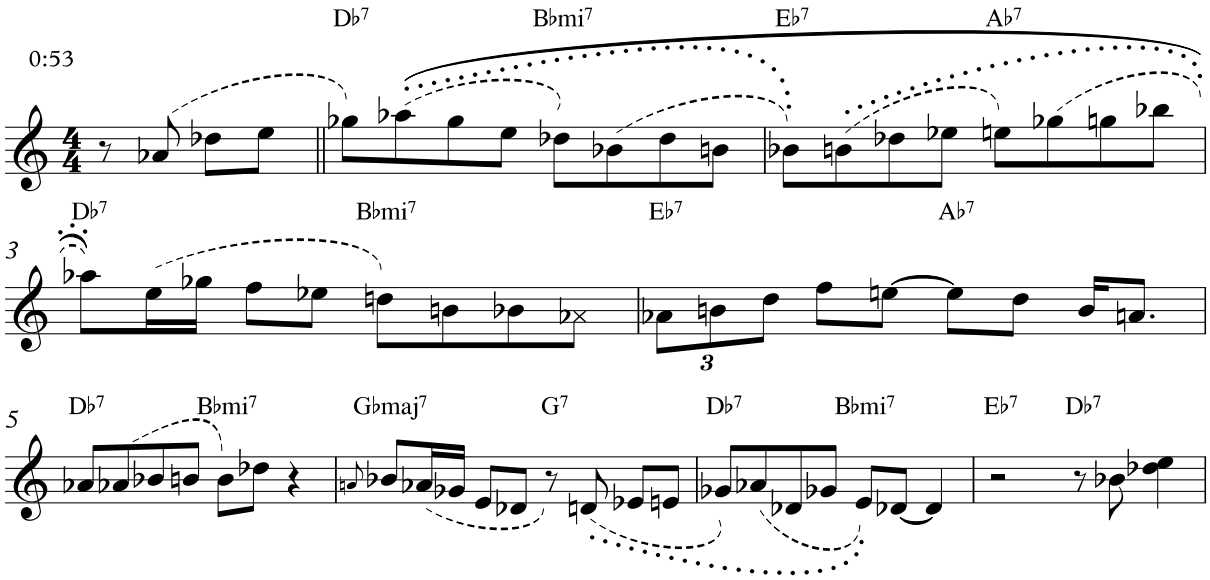
The jubilant outcome of Jackson's free-flowing melismata, spiralling upwards, downwards and then all over again, are firmly tied to the semantic messages that Jackson conveys through the symbols that he came to understand in the musical world he inhabited. The gradual upholding of repeated but increasingly amplified melodic segments creates stand-alone musical orations. His lines undulate, yet at the same time they are relentlessly driven forward. This motion is generated by manifold musical devices, one of which is his ability to switch from phrasing forward to a more static way of delivery. It is not only what he plays, but how he plays it. The forward motion of his lines, which make the sonic display on this record so gripping and so different from what he had delivered only a few years before, became one of his most prominent performance strategies and characterized much of Jackson's playing from the mid-1950s. This effect is evident on both the blues discussed earlier, 'Opus and Interlude', and 'Now's the Time'. On the latter (Example 6-4), one can observe the change in phrasing at 0:54 when Jackson's phrasing clearly surges forward for four beats but swiftly changes back when he hits that Eb.

Example 6-4 Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Now's the Time', mm. 4–5

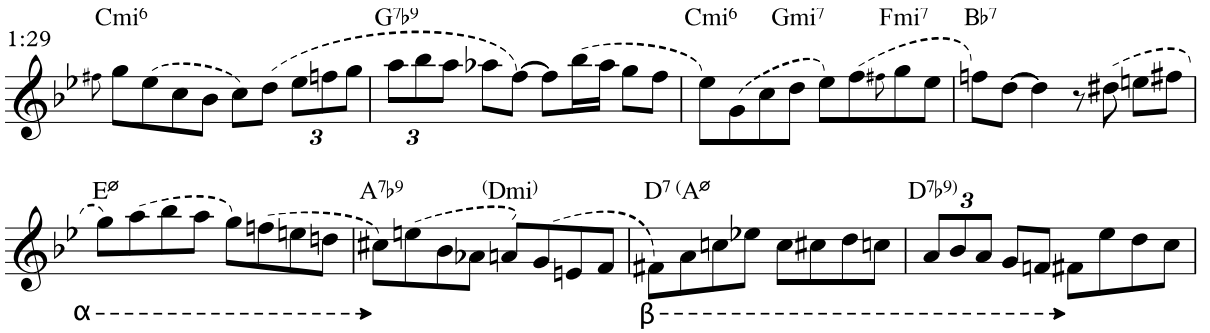


Melodic patterns or phrases were shaped by Jackson according to his needs and were distinguished from simpler sounds, even some that were part of larger structures themselves. Jackson's practice of phrasing forward is strongly linked with a bodily motion; a performed action. It can be heard on 'Stuffy' as well (from the same record date with Hawkins), where Jackson phrases forward not in semiquaver lines, as was common, but in building consecutive quaver lines at a faster tempo (Example 6-5), as in the bridge of 'Moonray' (Example 6-6). These tools became more prominent in Jackson's palette as he further developed his improvisational style, and as both instrument and recording technologies more accurately captured the intricacies of his performances.

Example 6-5. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Stuffy', mm. 1–8



Example 6-6. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Moonray', bridge



6.3 Interlude: Jazz Improvisation as Gestural Activity

Musical gesture has received various interpretations. David Lidov has described gesture as movement marked for significance, whether by or for the agent or the interpreter. Lidov proposed that music's significance lies in our ability to identify perceived sonorous motion with somatic experience.[32] Lidov argued that music bears significance if and only if its capacity to convey somatic experience is understood and, in so doing, made a radical departure from some formal approaches to musical content in suggesting that the bodily motion may account for the felt significance in sound. Hatten proposes that bodily gestures, whether they are intentionally produced for meaningful interpretation or not, may be defined as those movements marked by their potential for meaningful interpretation.[33] The generalisation of gesture as 'significant energetic shaping through time' rests upon the capacity of the senses to represent a 'flow event' in this way and interactively to share their representations to integrate an assemblage of perceptions into a singular event. In this respect, intentionality is an important aspect of interpreting musical gesture, but it is not required to outline it explicitly in any consideration. Every movement a performer makes to produce sound is already marked as relevant to the production of 'significant'.

Gesture has been widely recognised by writers from a variety of traditions as being pertinent to the expressive content of human expression and interaction. As a form of nonverbal communication, gesture includes movements of the hands, face or other bodily parts. Because of the implicit meaning that humans derive from nonverbal interaction, there is a persistent exploration of the role of gesture in education, and the role of gesture in, for example, music education and mathematics. Scholars have proposed that language has evolved directly from an earlier system in *Homo sapiens* that consisted of manual gestures. This idea, termed Gestural Theory, dates to the work of eighteenth-century priest and philosopher Etienne Bonnot, Abbé de Condillac, and has been supported by anthropologist Gordon W. Hewes in his discussion of the origins of language. Socrates also hypothesised about the origins of Greek words in Plato's satirical dialogue, *Cratylus*, and his speculation included a possible role for sound based iconicity as well as for visual gestures employed by the deaf.[34] In music studies, emphases vary according to discipline. Semioticians Hatten and Lidov have focused on detailed analysis of gestural moments as they related to style and

[32] Lidov, 'Mind and Body in Music', 70.

[33] Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures*, 112.

[34] David F. Armstrong, 'The Gestural Theory of Language Origins', *Sign Language Studies* 8, no. 3 (2008), 289.

performance.[35] Other studies include, but are not limited to, Carolyn Abbate's study of musical narrative, Naomi Cumming's study on musical subjectivity and signification and Daniel Leech-Wilkinson's study of recorded musical performance.[36] To my knowledge, no study exists that takes into consideration, and at length, gesture in jazz improvisation. Guerino Mazzola and Paul Cherlin consider gesture in free jazz performance which results in a kind of mathematical music theory which I have not managed to familiarise myself with.[37]

I am interested with two kinds of sources for the exploration of gesture in Jackson's music. The first category is physical: I am concerned with changes in music that appear as development over time which may be identified by the patterns produced in their own dynamic structure.[38] The patterns are themselves dynamic and are produced by, but also specify, musical events. This allows us a specific alternative to the mediated information of information processing, the matched patterns of pattern recognition, and the traditional schemas, categories, and the concepts of cognition. The second category I am concerned with is social and includes an understanding of identity. It assumes that if any bodily movement is a representation that has a significant coherence, our perceptual awareness of our own body in space and time provides feedback for our actions, no less than our perception of objects and events. By discussing the materialisation of identity in Jackson's music in terms of mutual mediation between three distinct and self-organising historical styles (jazz, gospel music and the blues), I explore how identity may be refracted in music as gesture, and how the musical styles can entangle themselves in evolving social formations and transformations. With reference to music's capacity to create aggregations of the affected, I consider Jackson's musical efflorescence as an aggregate of the fusions of the elements distinct in the three styles.

Although action has been recognised as functionally specific, not anatomically specific, as proposed by Peter Kugler and Michael Turvey, and demonstrated by Karl Pribram, I would rather consider function to dictate but also to be constrained by physical

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[35] Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures*; Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation*. Lidov, 'Mind and Body in Music'.

[36] Carolyn Abbate, 'Music——drastic or Gnostic', *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 3 (2004). Cumming, *The Sonic Self*. Leech-Wilkinson, 'The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performances', (2009): http://www.charm.kcl.ac.uk/studies/chapters/intro.html (accessed 24 July 2017).

[37] Guerino Mazzola and Paul B. Cherlin, *Flow, Gesture and Spaces in Free Jazz: Towards a Theory of Collaboration* (Berlin: Springer, 2008).

[38] I borrow from Viki McCabe's introduction to outline this first observation. See Viki McCabe, 'Introduction: Event Cognition and the Conditions of Existence', in *Event Cognition: An Ecological Perspective* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1986), 3-23.

conditions.[39] Gestural competency is sourced in social and cultural contexts and is highly stylistic, as noted by Hatten.[40] Culturally we absorb information and mimic bodily movements through social interaction. The scope of these movements is formidably wide and range from typical emotive expressions in everyday life to intonations of language, as well as ritualised gestures in cultural institutions extending from social dances to civic ceremonies and religious rituals. Jackson's upbringing was situated in a matrix of such ideas, whereby the vibist would interpret signs of cultural activity in the church, the jazz scene, family and social life in African American communities. His gestures are interpretative tools to consider identity and its musical manifestations as, for example metre, tonality, coherent in terms of musical elements, and its contextualisation in terms of musical events and their cultural significance. In this respect, music as material culture offers an interpretative window into how musical gesture may have its own material and semiotic properties. Musical sound is non-representational, non-artefactual and alogogenic. As we have seen, in the absence of a denotative or literal level of meaning in the music of Jackson, musical sound engendered a profusion of extra-musical connotations of various kinds: visual, sensual, emotional and intellectual, which meanings were associated with his roots in the church, the city of Detroit and the jazz music scene. Ethnomusicologists, in the face of such profusion of signification have analysed the existence of linguistic metaphors for music, an approach extended by Born who focused on how metaphors combine and cohere into wider discursive formations, raising questions of power.[41]

In many ways, the two categories that I have highlighted are not truly separable: musical gestures and social ones are not unconnected and, in this respect, it is worth pausing to consider what might constitute Jackson's identity in music. On the one side, in the jazz scene identity is concerned with the perceptible result of an individual's patterned choices within a social domain, a personal style, and those characteristic ways of forming sound that may highlight their individual 'voice' or, as described earlier, their sonic signature. The melodic patterns that I have hitherto identified in Jackson's music were shaped by the vibist to become and express gesture, and to bear significance within an improvised musical passage. For Naomi Cumming, this understanding identity as 'personal style' is consistent

[39] Peter Noble Kugler and Michael T. Turvey, *Information, Natural Law, and the Self Assembly of Rhythmic Movement* (Hilldale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaym Associates, 1987), 407. Karl H. Pribam, 'Problems Concerning the Structure of Consciousness', in *Consciousness and the Brain: A Scientific and Philosophical Enquiry*, ed. Gordon Globus, Grower Maxwell and Irvin Savodnik (New York: Plenum Press, 1976), 307-08.

[40] Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures*, 234.

[41] Born, *Rationalising Culture*.

with the standpoint on selfhood found in the social psychology of George Herbert Mead and the philosophical view of Charles Peirce in his exploration of signs.[42] Cumming explains that Pierce's perception of identity reflects a move against Cartesian solipsism and that the 'self' is not, as Descartes implied, an ineffable mystery, one formed by its own private thoughts, existing alone as reflective spectator on events in the world.[43] Rather, the 'self' is an intrinsically social and interactive experience. Improvising musicians are formed by participation in the social media of gesture, language and music, making choices among an augmented repertoire of available ones. Cumming explains that this publicly observable 'thing' is the 'outward face of identity'. Without this face, it would be impossible to see evidence of identity in bodily movement and any kind of gestural mannerisms and to hear it in the characteristic dialects or timbral choices of musicians. Cumming explains that the 'outward' identity of choices audible in sound reflects patterns of beliefs and a desire that constitutes 'inner self'— 'what is it to be "me"'.[44] In the next chapter I discuss in more detail how both motivated and unmotivated decisions came into play in Jackson's identity in music, and how we may consider the plethora of social energies and musical choices that came into play in his music.

6.4 Jazz as Embodied Sound: Movement and Interpretation

Jackson's legato sound was an important development in his music; one that influenced the reception of the instrument and distanced it from that old, cartoonish sound. The continuity that the vibist gave to his melodic lines was fundamental to this development and, based on this perceptual phenomenon, Jackson improvised lines were delivered not merely as a sequence of pitches but as an articulation that bind discrete pitches into a continuity of sound. A spectrogram would probably reveal that Jackson's attack and decay on every pitch of these ascending and descending runs are of equal length.[45] Another reason for this perceived phenomenon was Jackson's articulation of playing 'behind the beat' without dragging the tempo back. But at the same time, as Hatten has demonstrated, hearing gestural continuity across breaks in actual sound is a strong mode of our musical interpretation.[46] Regularity of

[42] Cumming, *The Sonic Self*, 10.

[43] Ibid.
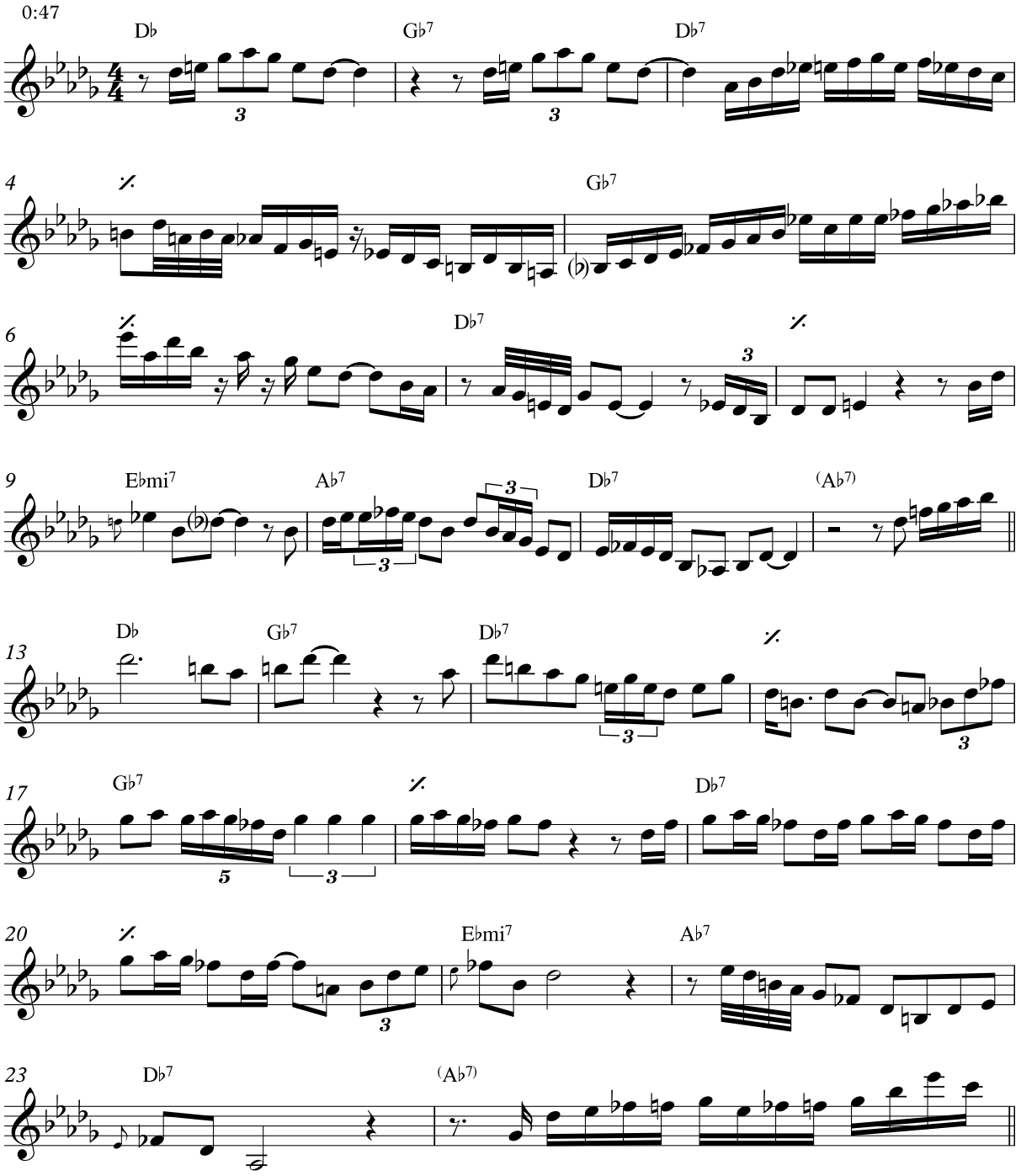
[44] Ibid., 11.

[45] I make the specific assumption given that during my study with pianist Hal Galper a significant part of our lessons was devoted to this phenomenon. Galper played with Jackson and often attempted to initiate me into hearing the vibraphone at this level of detail.

[46] Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures*, 177-216.

patterning such as the one I have identified in Jackson's music enables listeners to take isolated events as units in a continuous chain of musical events. The chain of riffs in Jackson's improvisation in 'Now's the Time' is instructive (Example 6-7). Despite the articulation of separate units at the beginning of the solo, as well as the concluding bars of the first chorus, the reiteration of a gestural pattern creates continuity at a further level of structure.

Example 6-7. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Now's the Time', mm. 1–24



Jackson had several such devices at his disposal. Most emerge over blues forms, scales and minor note groupings, as for example on the fifth degree of a dominant scale (e.g. a C minor note grouping superimposed on an F dominant scale). Discrete units that are

repeated as a pattern form the basis for continuity.[47] Jackson's articulation of small yet distinct units form the material for thematic gestures that play a significant role in the performance. Some of these devices, aside from the musical impact they have in a performance, signify something bigger than the performance in isolation. Rather, they set the trajectory of the improvisation. As a point of comparison, consider the performance of 'Now's the Time' (example above). These blue figures constitute a kind of developing variation, not merely as a configuration of pitches but rather in a continuum of performance among different practitioners. The synthesis of such devices, their articulation, dynamics and timing comprise in themselves thematic gestures. Equally, in discussing the descending runs that Jackson performed (for example) in 'Opus and Interlude', the devices (such as running one dominant into another) all function as gestures in terms of movement. But they also signify something bigger than the musical moment itself as Jackson demonstrates an understanding of the musical knowledge of the time; also, a synthesis of the cultural forces that come into play in the vibist's music.

[47] Of course, the song used for improvisation also dictates continuity, at least to some extent, given the repetition of its chord sequence.

7 BAG'S BLUES: BLUES AS SENSIBILITY AND CULTURAL CONDITIONING

Writing in 1962 for *Saturday Review,* Ralph Ellison criticised Robert Reisner for his failure to explore the many implications of Charlie Parker's nickname 'Bird' in his book *Bird: The Legend of Charlie Parker*. Ellison wondered why, while a nickname is 'indicative of a change from a given to an achieved identity', Reisner failed to explore such meanings, suggesting that a nickname may speak for the individual's interaction with his fellows. He wittily suggested:

> since we suspect that more of legend is involved in [Parker's] renaming than Mr. Reisner's title indicates, let us at least consult Roger Tory Peterson's "Field Guide to the Birds" for a hint as to why, during a period when most jazz men were labelled "cats," someone hung the bird on Charlie. Let us note too that "legend" originally meant "the story of a saint" and that saints were often identified with symbolic animals.[1]

In a similar fashion—and in quoting from Ellison—Travis Jackson rightfully remarks that meaning(s) beyond the surface characteristics of a jazz performance must be explored.[2] In the spirit of such an intellectual current, this chapter—its title referring to one of the most frequently performed blues in the jazz repertoire, and Milt Jackson's most popular composition—evaluates Jackson's identity in music.

7.1 The Blues as Identity

Since jazz emerged as a distinct style in the United States, where the clear majority of the music's best known representatives were also born, it was quickly labelled as a product distinctive of North America and a cultural product unique to its geographical region. This was despite the global presence of jazz, which led Bruce Johnson (among others) to assert that 'jazz was not invented and then exported. It was invented in the process of being disseminated'.[3] But to be speaking of the cultural product of a single population is misleading. At the time when jazz was born, if such a moment exists, changes were sweeping across the country to the extent that is impossible to pin down the development of jazz to a single essence. Given the intricate web of practices, meanings and locations in jazz, some which have their roots in diverse cultures worldwide, it might seem necessary to explore how

[1] Ralph Ellison, 'On Bird, Bird-Watching and Jazz', *Saturday Review*, 28 June 1962, 48.

[2] Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away*, 109.

[3] Bruce Johnson, 'The Jazz Diaspora', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jazz*, ed. Mervyn Cooke and David Horn (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 39.

such a plethora of articulations of and relations between heterogeneous elements on American soil operated and eventually produced the 'American' art form. This search for homology has of course long been practised in popular music studies and has been most commonly associated with subculture theory, which accounts of, for example, punk or heavy metal. As Frith proposes, the hypothetical (or lack of it) between aesthetic and social values has a long history in the study of popular culture and is closely linked to assertions of cultural essentialism.[4]

Instead of launching myself in a sort of cultural archaeology—tracing the connections back from the music to the social groups who produced and consumed it—I am interested in investigating some of the ways with Jackson sustained, displayed, discarded or by other means represented an identity in music, in terms of musical style, subjective identity and social strategy. Jackson's identity was a signifying attitude in a social domain; one influenced by a multiplicity of cultural expressions. In musical performance, for example, under the rubric of the performative there are restrictions that culture imposes as much as there are ways in which the performative may satirise or parody the script imposed by culture. An obvious example is provided by Ramsey, who notes the legacies of nineteenth-century minstrelsy that involved the public degradation of the black body in the American entertainment sphere. One hundred years after minstrelsy's emergence, African Americans used this same signifier to upset a racist social order and to affirm their culture in the public entertainment and the private circles.[5] This new attitude was so prevalent that it represented a huge departure from earlier modes of racial uplift and especially the politics of respectability championed by the black professional and upper-class citizens who sought to discipline African Americans into bourgeois submission.[6] Equally, performance traditions in jazz have influenced the ways we think about music over long periods of time as much as individual performers have things to teach us about pieces of music that are as interesting and valuable as the subtlest analyses and commentaries. In other words, it is important to consider identity as dynamic: as something mobile that is both personal and collective, as well as something in

[4] Frith, 'Music and Identity', 108.

[5] Ramsey, *Race Music*, 51. A detailed account of the forms of entertainment that influenced blackface minstrelsy, as well as the cultural expressions of race and class, is provided by Dale Cockrell in his book *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997).

[6] In her study of women activists in the black Baptist Church at the turn of the twentieth century, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham coined the term 'politics of respectability' to describe the pursuit of racial uplift via the adoption of hegemonic behaviour. See Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); Lawrence W. Levine, 'The Concept of the New Negro and the Realities of Black Culture', in *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 86-106.

a state of flux, a process of becoming. This point has also been laboured by Ajay Heble, who writes:

> Improvisation's link with processes of identity formation and struggles for self-definition has less to do with a creative actualisation of the self as a stable origin of meaning, than it does with unsettling the very logic of identity. If anything, improvisation teaches us by example that identity is a dialogic construction (rather than something deep within us), that the self is always a subject-in-process.[7]

If identity is a site in which dynamic processes and markers are used for identification, boundaries provide the framework on which this virtual site is built. After all, to echo Marx, the self may only be imagined as an organisation of social, physical and material forces.

As much as 'the blues' is not something uniquely material but rather an experience, Jackson's identity accounts for a system of music making enjoyed by and influential among many Americans. In this scenario, however, it is linked, both historically and socially, to specific African American communities. The sensibility that occupied the Detroit communities, for example, informed not only musical structures but, most importantly, gestures that expressed social energies, musical articulations in the form of stylistic devices, sonic signatures and performance rhetoric. In the hands of capable practitioners, the blues allowed jazz musicians to express a diversity of identities at specific historical moments. Undoubtedly, these identities meant different things to different audiences and performers alike. Jazz, in this respect, is useful in materialising concepts of identity or of 'one's voice', because it offers a sense of both self and other; of both the subjective and the collective. It has 'no material essence', to paraphrase Born, 'but a plural and distributed materiality'.[8] A larger quotation from Slobin is instructive:

> Music seems to have an odd quality […] the simultaneous projecting and dissolving of the self in performance. Individual, family, gender, age, supercultural givens, and other factors hover around the musical space but can penetrate only very partially the moment of enactment of musical fellowship. Visible to the observer, these constraints remain unseen by the musicians, who are instead working out a shared vision that involves both the assertion of pride, even ambition, and the simultaneous disappearance of the ego.[9]

Identity accounts for both social and aesthetic processes and defines aesthetic and stylistic aspects of the performance. To return to my earlier point about the jazz style of the

[7] Heble, *Landing on the Wrong Note*, 95.

[8] Born, 'Music and the Materialisation of Identities', 377.

[9] Slobin, *Subculture Sounds: Micromusic of the West*, 41.

1940s emerging as a collective accomplishment, identity in music betrays a continuity between the group and the individual.[10] In performance, improvising musicians are in a constant state of flux between asserting themselves but also losing themselves, as Ellison proposed (and from whom I have quoted earlier at length), in an act of participation ('because jazz finds its very life in improvisation upon traditional materials, the jazz man must lose his identity even as he finds it').[11] In our pursuit of understanding what an identity might mean in the jazz scene, we need then, to rethink of the mainstream sociological approach to aesthetic expression. Social groups do articulate beliefs through music, but music 'articulates in itself an understanding of both group relations and individuality, on the basis of which ethical codes and social ideologies are understood'.[12] Equally, to be speaking of Jackson's identity in performance requires a consideration beyond technical skills and formal understanding. Rather, it is necessary to challenge the emotional life and rationality in the name of musical interpretation. For Jackson to reach the peak of performance in his career required training at a time when he was formed as an interpreting musician in a mould of gospel music, jazz and blues, in a community of practice that required to be approached with a certain sensitivity.

Ethnographic studies by Monson and Berliner are proof that investigating matters of identity as it plays out among different streams of the jazz scene reveals how meanings of what constitutes identity remain contingent and intertwined.[13] An identity, musical or other, is comprised of many components but, in the end, we see how all these are part of the same communicating vessels. The experiences that shaped Jackson formed the foundation of his own sense of history and self-imagination. They informed Jackson's persona and musical voice. Of course, while the stories that I describe in sketching Jackson's upbringing depict real people making sense of a world that we are far from understanding, we may, however, attempt to imagine it. A question is therefore inevitably begged: what connections exist between real-life experiences and the blues, or even more complex webs of musical practices? Such connections are extremely problematic to prove and I should make clear that I am not interest in drawing one-to-one homologies between Jackson's blues mask and his life stories in the church or Detroit. I am, however, proposing that the sensibilities endowing these cultural memories and musical works possess a tangible coherence and are drawn from

[10] Ibid., 42. Quoted in Frith, 'Music and Identity', 111.

[11] Ellison, *Shadow and Act*, 234.

[12] Frith, 'Music and Identity', 111.

[13] See for example ethnographic studies by Berliner, Frith and Monson: Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*. Frith, 'Music and Identity'. Ingrid Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

the same social and cultural well. The imagination and collective memory of a family, neighbourhood, classroom, congregation, school band, jam session and professional musical life embody a cultural sensibility that allows us to interpret Jackson's musical outputs.

In this light, it is useful to develop an understanding concerning the capacities of jazz to mediate and mobilise identity formation and how the blues manifests itself in such a cultural context. If identity is a point of convergence between aesthetic figure, community and musical style, it is reliant on the collective production of memory. Born's succinct take summarises the argument well:

> Rather than any assured linkage between music and wider social formations, it is by analysing genre as entailing a mutual mediation between two self-organising historical entities —musical formations (on the one hand) and social identity formations (on the other)— that we can grasp the way that wider social identity formations are refracted in music, and that musical genres entangle themselves in evolving social formations.[14]

Beyond getting a better idea of the enormous breadth of sounds and expressions that are available in jazz, a wider vantage point assists our understanding of how identity may shape practices, relations and influence musical meaning. While my exploration points more to Jackson's reality at a given time and place, it is also suggestive of the multiplicity of the matters that weave identities: location, time, place and social context, all which elucidate the mutual entanglement of musical and social formations. The traditional modernist narratives that Jackson embraced worked an important paradigm for black American cultural production, ideals which in Afro-modernist practice were revised and rearranged through cultural expressions; a revisionism that, as Ramsey notes, 'has been a hallmark of Afro-modernism'.[15] Ramsey proposes that this demonstrates how the consciousness, sensibilities and values of African Americans were not contained by the boundaries set either by commercial marketing strategies or the arbiters of tastes within and outside black culture.[16]

Following these observations, it may be useful to consider Barth's seminal work in examining the constitution of groups and the nature of the boundaries between them. I have stressed earlier the many facets of the African American experience and the diversity of the groups in black American culture. Barth has noted how boundaries persist despite the flow of personnel across them as well as how social relations are maintained across boundaries

[14] Born, 'Music and the Materialisation of Identities', 384.

[15] Ramsey, *Race Music*, 73.

[16] Ibid.

precisely because of the dichotomised ethnic statuses.[17] In the case of Jackson, then, the formation of his identity in the church, the plethora of African American micro communities in Detroit as well as the jazz scene of Detroit and later New York, did not create dissonance between his perceived identities: on the contrary, it may well have enhanced the affiliation between these cultural expressions. Jackson did not become the prey of cultural difference but rather was a culture-bearing unit and a point of contact and interdependence for these collectivities. His cultural work becomes an opportunity to examine the different processes that seem to be involved in generating and maintaining identities as cultural expressions by means of shifting the focus from the internal constitution and history of these groups to the way these are defined: through their boundaries and their maintenance.

In this respect, recent studies have demonstrated how musical performance is not only inextricably linked to wider social identity formations, but can reconfigure or even catalyse these formations. Jocelyne Guilbault, for example, maintains that embodied and social interactions in social performance in Trinidad 'reiterate identities' whilst also allowing news points of connections to be developed.[18] I described earlier how in the jazz scene in Detroit, where Jackson was brought up, such connections were often a medium for both identity formation and of social aggregation. This property of music was theorised by Straw, who I have briefly cited in section 5.2. By comparing two musically distinctive genres (alternative rock and electronic dance music), Straw points to music's capacity to construct 'affective alliances', propagating musically imagined communities that are irreducible to prior categories of social identity.[19] Born notes that Straw's concept of 'scene' was a departure from the idea that music articulates only pre-existing identity formations; rather, music is also a means to forms of collective identification, even if this is traversed by other vectors of identity (race, ethnicity, class, gender). Music, then, can both produce its own affective and aggregative effects, whilst also respond and transform pre-existing social formations.[20]

Born notes that sectioning these considerations may reveal how affective dimensions of musical experience may fuel social aggregation, providing part of the answer to music's mediation of social identities. Although insufficient, such perspectives contribute to an analysis of the mutual mediation of musical and social identity formations. When detached

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[17] Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture and Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 10.

[18] Jocelyne Guibault, 'Music, Politics and Pleasure: Live Soca in Trinidad', *Small Axe* 14, no. 1 (2010), 17.

[19] Straw, 'Systems of Articulation, Logics of Change: Communities and Scenes in Popular Music', 374.

[20] Born, *Rationalising Culture*, 382.

from the analysis of larger social formations and enduring musical, cultural and historical processes, they are reductive in the literal sense of the evasion of ineluctable complexity.[21] In equal terms, some of the admittedly selective discussion of Jackson's dynamic and discursive musical designs (and the analytical polarization of the musical experience that comes as a result) may seem at first problematic, for it fails to take account of the several social modulations which are mediated in his musical outputs. These were, after all, simultaneously products of introspective thought and of culturally embedded practice. His persona was an amalgam of sonic and ideological shards, rooted in the church, the blues, bebop's aesthetics and assertive politics; his music was situated in 'inventive juxtapositions of Afrological and Eurological sensibilities' (as Ramsey's said of Bud Powell), all blended in the formal conventions of America's 'classical music'.[22] As such, what may have constituted his identity was the product of both the music's formal dimensions and of Jackson's accumulated creative energy, which must be considered as altogether integrated and interdependent, rather than as analytically unassociated components.

7.2 The Blues as Social Temporality

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews, Fay Hield has illustrated how the English folk-singing scene's seeming informality and inclusiveness mask the need for participants to negotiate certain unspoken social structures. In her study of the tension inherent in musical participation in English folk singing, Hield explained how the successful participation depended upon both social and musical engagement and described the paradox whereby 'people are required to learn behavioural norms through participation before they can participate appropriately'.[23] Extending this context to African American communities at the turn of the previous century, the music represented a gathering of realised cultural ideals in which one's body, together with linguistic expressions and a plethora of gestures, revealed their position within their society. One such notable example is the Church of God in Christ (of which Milt Jackson was a member) where music with its powerful rhythms and mysticism aroused, through ecclesiastical rituals, divine ecstasy. The music in the Church of God in Christ was a means of spiritual advancement for participants, as well as an important social function (to which Jackson testified). Ruth Finnegan, in her detailed exploration of

[21] Born, 'Music and the Materialisation of Identities', 385.

[22] Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 184.

[23] Fay Hield, 'In Defence of Revivals: Tradition and Community in a Contemporary English Folk Club', in *Proceedings of the English Folk Dance and Song Society Flok Conference*, ed. David Atkinson and Steve Roud 2013), 173-87.

musical participation in the town of Milton Keynes demonstrated the richness and diversity of music making, and significantly for my purposes here the diversity of 'musical pathways' that show the meaning derived from such localised musical expressions.[24] Participation in music was for Jackson not only a representation of his family's place within their community (his father was a deacon in the Church), but also revealed his willingness to be part of this community. In this performance context, and despite recognition of his gifts, Jackson was not licentiously individual but rather committed to a broader sociality.

A consideration of the signs that come into play in Jackson's music may reveal how all these elements are often irreducible to one another, how they were articulated in contingent ways through relations of synergy, affordance, conditioning or causality. Taking his cue from Julia Kristeva, Barthes, for example, proposed the existence of the twin levels of geno- and pheno-song. Both prefixes proffer an analytic that traces the social inside the musical performance. Pheno-song, Barthes argues, includes all aspects of a performance that fulfil culturally accepted standards of competent musical communication.[25] In a similar way, Travis Jackson describes the attributes that fulfil culturally accepted standards in a competent musical communication or in the social space where musicians operate. Geno-song, on the other hand, is for Barthes that which has the potential to exceed the normative cultural standards and to point beyond music played to express an additional essence, what he calls 'the grain'. The grain is the materiality of the body in the voice: 'the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs'.[26]

These observations further invite me to consider a shift from thinking about identity to considering social temporality and, in pursuit of these matters, more immediately helpful to me than any field in musicology have been the gendered arguments of Judith Butler and specifically Butler's proposition that gender is being performed.[27] In jazz, African Americanness is also performed; it has a matter of function and is a means of achieving and projecting knowledge. It takes a specific significance through repeated performances defined and delimited by the music's culture. Following this, I want to propose that the African Americanness of and in jazz is carried through countless actions, the aggregate of which becomes recognisable to both performers and participants as the role that the musical or

[24] Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 297-326.

[25] Roland Barthes, 'The Grain of the Voice', In *Image, Music, Text*, edited by Stephen Heath, 179–89 (London: Fontana Press, 1977): 181.

[26] Ibid., 188.

[27] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

social performer will play in a constantly contested system of relationships among bodies. It is the cumulative result of a repetition of acts that constitute identities and of social performances in the jazz scene.

In *Blowin' the Blues Away* Travis Jackson depicts the African Americanness of jazz as a series of metaphors about the relationships between certain kind of bodies. These relationships are correspondences that are produced and experienced as a metaphorical dance, a cognitive pattern or model that encompasses a wide variety of cultural practices beyond the activity of music making. As a metaphor, the African Americanness of jazz is an embodied language through which human gestures, as well as the way these are obedient (or not) to any meaningful choreographic intention in a musical or social performance, are radically visual in both nature and effect. Although Travis Jackson fails to report of the centrality of visual listening in the scene—and yet the visual domain of a live performance is always at the forefront of the experience—visual style is an integral part of the African Americanness of jazz. Travis Jackson and his interviewees seemingly argue for the African American signature of jazz, the paths of origins that signify the music and its culture. In a blues-oriented performing tradition, musicians (re)interpret this signature as a continuum of performing practices.

In this context, a consideration of jazz performance as dance offers a whole new way of appreciating the flow and force of jazz as culture in its space of action. It allows us to consider the separateness of the often-inseparable elements of music and culture: the performativity as a product of the music and the performativity inhabiting the music. This metaphorical dance includes: (a) the volumetric dimension of jazz in a music scene (the jazz spatiality); (b) the body in performance and the physicality of jazz; (c) the temporality of jazz as culturally embedded practice and of performance as a cultural moment (the discussion of the jazz tradition is indissolubly linked to this consideration). Through this all-encompassing consideration, the jazz dance as movement references its own social continuity. The music possesses a rhythmic and textural patterning that is transformed through the addition of a whole new rhythmic layer in the shape of a dance, working as a kind of spatial and gestural counterpoint. In this process, the African Americanness of jazz defines the signature of the music and becomes a symbol of the paths that signify. This intimate structural and expressive concurrence is intensified through conventional visual surface elements as the relationships that performing bodies display during a performance. In my analysis of the surviving audio-visual footage of Milt Jackson, this relationship is ever present.

7.3 Livin' the Music: The Blues as Sensibility

The blues modality was everywhere in mid-century North America. It provided artists like Jackson with an artistic framework in which to build personal style and music that spoke powerfully to several constituencies. Ramsey demonstrated that, as a musical system, the blues provided the possibility for women such as Dinah Washington to articulate a subjective presence into a male-centred musical discourse like jazz.[28] Some artists transformed the blues into a personal style that influenced subsequent generations. Others fashioned a stage presence and musical legacy for the working class that became the basis for several developments in American popular music. The music of saxophonist and entertainer Louis Jordan, for example, paved the way to rock'n'roll and rhythm and blues, to name but two. Jordan's musical influences were multifaceted and his story presents many similarities with that of other musicians that left a mark on mid-century American music: the travelling medicine and minstrel shows of his youth and the Baptist church were some of them, together with the influence of the more theatrical jazz stars such as Cab Calloway and Fats Waller. All these unique stories provide a framework that reminds us of the power of the artistic narratives that grew in the first half of the previous century. These stories give us, once more, a sense of the varied and dynamic kinds of social energies that circulated within and around the blues muse in African American culture.[29]

Jackson weaved together the modernist articulations of the virtuoso solo 'voice' that came with bebop, the blues and the gospels as Afro-modernist ideals that can be heard in many recordings from the period. And yet, despite the coexistence of several stylistic traits in his music, we never face musically contrasting statements in the narrative. Rather, these elements are often irreducible to one another and articulated in contingent ways through means of synergy, affordance, conditioning and causality. In other words, they emerge in his improvisations as a plural distributed materiality: in multiple simultaneous forms of existence, as sonic trace, as social and embodied performance. As a result, notions of blues and soulfulness are loosely attributed as matters of action and practice in his music, highlighting the code-fusion between urban and more sanctified references. By adopting a topological metaphor of the plane to stand for distinctive performance strategies mediated in Jackson's improvisations, the task is to highlight both their autonomy and mutual interference.

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[28] Ramsey, *Race Music*, 44-75.

[29] Ibid., 75.

I want to explore the blues in Jackson's music as a product for musical effect that moves beyond the essential components of its main characteristics, such as blues forms and scales, and suggest some devices that have contributed to his reception as having a bluesy and 'soulful' sound. For example, Jackson's musical habit of using minor note groupings (for example, starting from the fifth degree on the dominant scale) contributes to the reception of his sound. 'His close friends and musical associates called him "the Rev" because when we played he delivered the most soulful sermons. The quiet man played his quiet gentle vibraphone with grace and elegance yet he would make us scream and holler with great joy,' Monty Alexander noted.[30] The discussion is tied to meanings explored in the fifth chapter 'Moving into the Tradition' and evokes the transmission of musical customs. It examines how through the blues, as much as bebop and church music, Jackson negotiated a relationship with the jazz styles with which he was involved. Just as important for my purpose, this notion explores the mediating process as building upon the tradition by using the whole corpus of materials in the cultural matrix; this process includes both motivated and unmotivated decisions.

7.4 The Blues as Musical Product

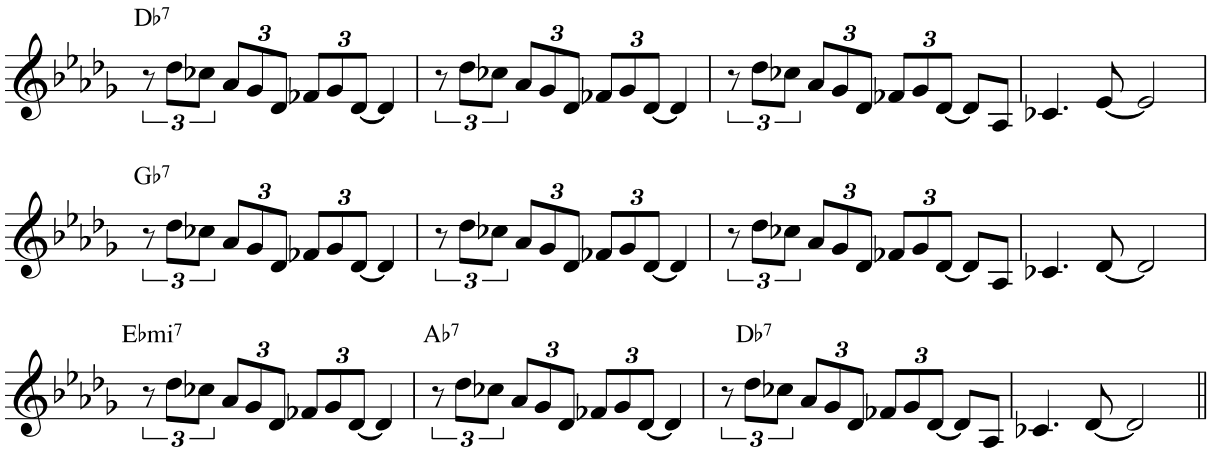
Jackson composed around one hundred compositions, many of which were blues.[31] He had a penchant for performing blues as well: a survey by Anita Clark in 1975 demonstrated that a third of the songs of his non-MJQ records were blues.[32] His compositions were often riff-based, and repetitive formats were quite typical of most of his blues compositions. For example, in 'S.K.J.', from his record *Bags Meets Wes!*, the theme is constructed by the threefold repetition of a phrase which itself contains three repetitions of a riff (Example 7-1). Most famously 'Bag's Groove', which I discuss further in the next section, also develops in a similar way.

[30] Monty Alexander, sleeve notes to Mike LeDonne's record *Bag's Groove: A Tribute to Milt Jackson*. Available online: http://www.doubletimerecords.com/scripts/dtr182.asp (accessed 18 September 2017).

[31] For an overview of Jackson's composition titles visit MJQ Music Inc. http://www.mjqmusic.com/index.php?page=compresults&first=Milt&last=Jackson (accessed 11 December 2017).
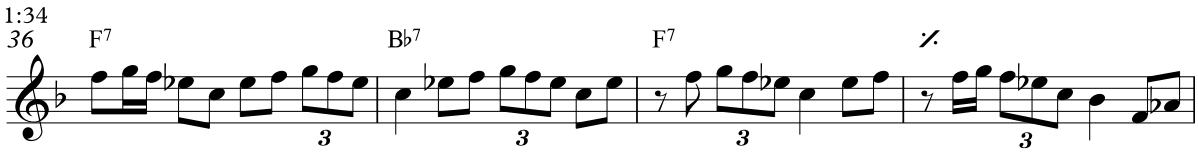
[32] Clark, 'A Stylistic Analysis of Milt Jackson Through Transcription and Analysis of Fifteen Improvised Solos', 1.

Example 7-1. Jackson's composition 'S.K.J'



Jackson did not only employ this technique only for composing blues but used such strategies on ample occasions during his solos and regardless of the compositional context. There are simply too many instances to refer to them all; I provide one such example of riff-like playing below (Example 7-2).

Example 7-2. Excerpt, Jackson's solo in 'Opus de Funk', mm. 36–39



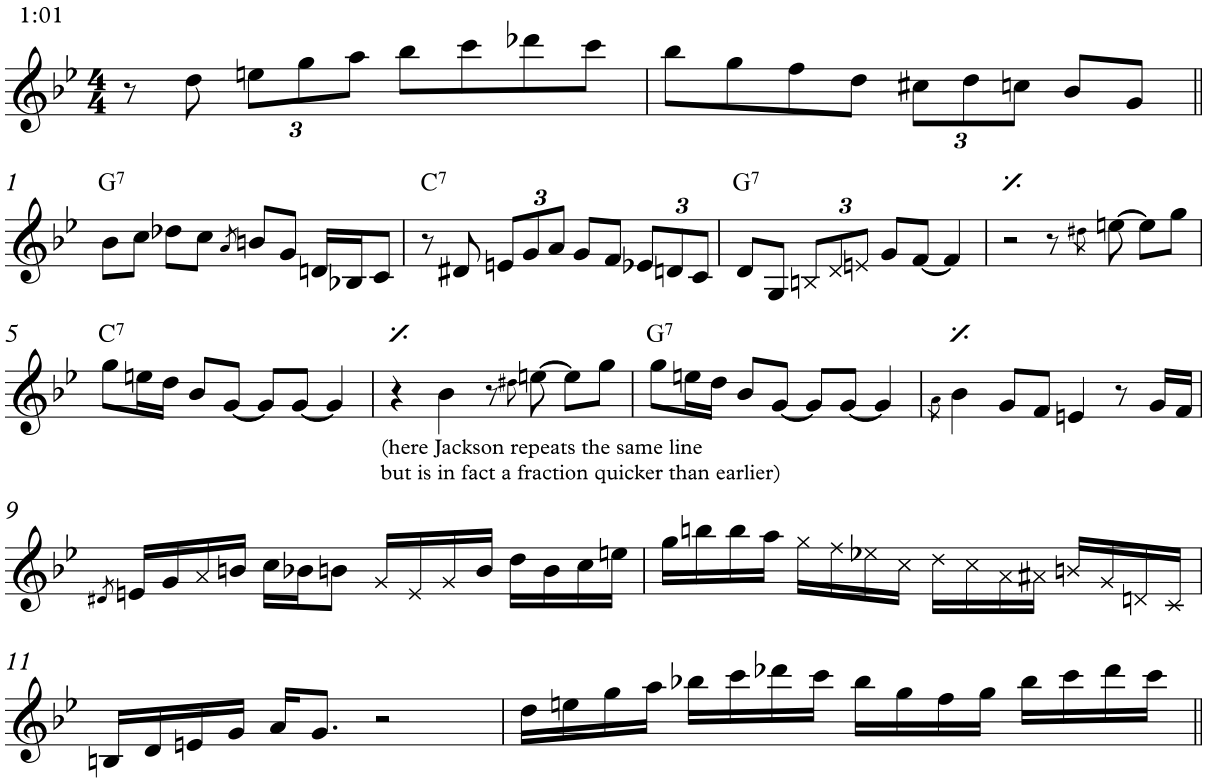
The riff was a predominant feature of the swing style. Although, Mervyn Cooke explains, 'the riff was bitterly resented by revivalists in the 1940s, who failed to see the creative potential such a fragmentary, gestural musical language - at once predictable and unpredictable - might have to offer,' the riff was used widely by Jackson and like-minded musicians.[33]

'Soulful', one of Jackson's trademark compositions, highlights several devices the vibist used frequently in his improvisations. The theme is based on a simple blues riff that develops between the root, second, major and minor thirds of the G blues scale. In 'Soulful', Jackson's 'pick-up phrase' is highly typical of the vibist and one that occurs countless times in his music. Jackson here plays the blues, but he uses the same motif for pick-up lines in many occasions over dominant chords. Frequent variations include approaching the E natural

[33] Mervyn Cooke, 'Jazz Among the Classics, and the Case of Duke Ellington', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jazz*, ed. Mervyn Cooke and David Horn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 161.

from a semitone below, as for example Jackson does in bar two over the C7 chord and in the second bar of the second chorus (Example 7-3).

Example 7-3. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'Soulful', mm. 1–12

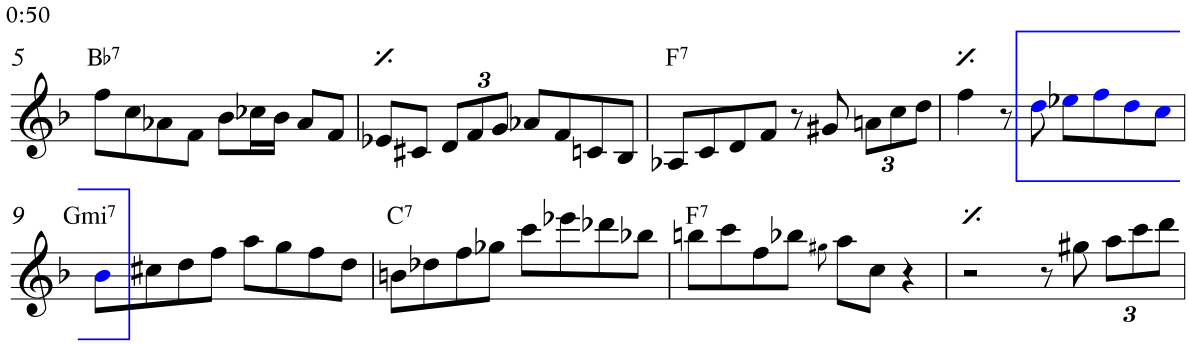


Another common device includes approaching the tonic of the blues from a minor third below (the sixth of the chord), then moving back down to the root an octave lower through the sixth, fifth and minor third of the chord (bars 4–5, repeated in bars 6–7). The choice of pitches here may appear as odd if one considers that a more obvious option would be to descend the line via the fifth and fourth (in this scenario the D and C). The exegesis behinds Jackson's note choices here is, I think, that the vibist phrases a G minor arpeggio over a C7 chord, hence the E natural, the third of the dominant. I have encountered this mode of thinking several times in his music and consider it to be one of the reasons why Jackson was considered so much as having a 'soulful' sound, given the fact that minor sounds are more often associated with liturgical settings. During an interview with McPartland for NPR music, Jackson played his composition 'For Someone I Love' for which the vibist—now on

piano for the requirements of the radio broadcast—also wrote the lyrics. Once finished, and pressed on this point, Jackson commented that 'the minor lens to the heart, if you listen'.[34]

Jackson used minor groupings freely, as for example when approaching the ii-minor chord of a blues in the turnaround (Example 7-4). He phrases iii-minor Locrian mode leading to the ii-minor (A Locrian in this example), as if he is implying a iii-VI / ii-V progression. He uses this device many times at the same point of the blues chorus.
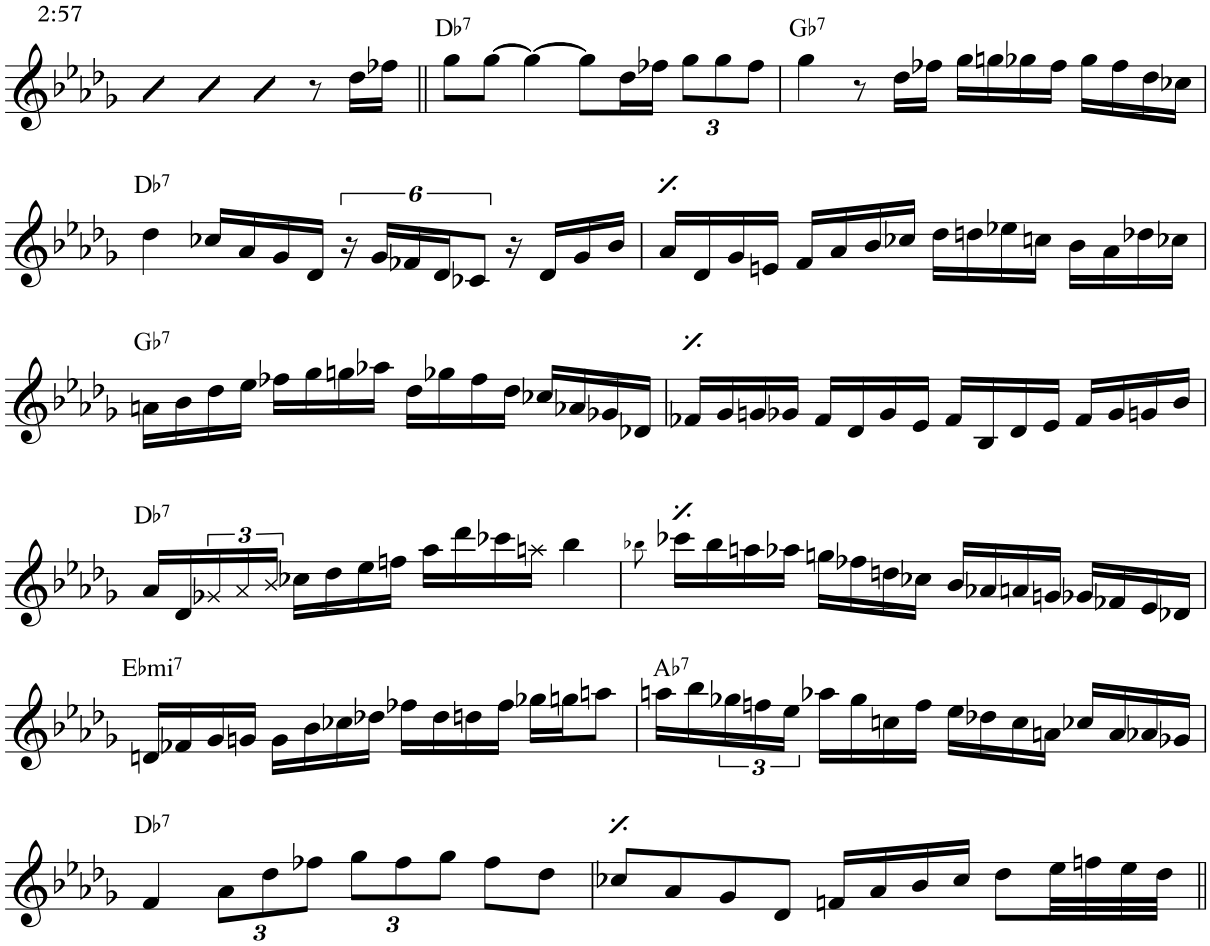
Example 7-4. Excerpt, Jackson's solo on 'Opus de Funk', mm. 5–12



Jackson's switch from improvising more elaborated, bebop-like phrases, to simple, riff-like melodies around the blues scale may have constituted a performance rhetoric for the blues, but this was often contrasted by his explosive reactions. One such instance can be observed in his solo on 'S.K.J.' where he enters the scene with a commanding ascending line, followed by an improvised chorus where he demonstrates his virtuosic abilities (Example 7-5). Despite the double-time phrasing, Jackson still manages to weave together the stylistic devices that I have hitherto highlighted, which by know constituted an inseparable part of his musical language. The ascending triplets which he performed in his first recordings are now transformed into ascending melodic runs, executed perfectly to serve his performance rhetoric. The vibist often treated his choruses as separable, reaching a climax three quarters into the chorus. For example, in 'S.K.J', Jackson resolves tension by landing on the third of the Db7 chord, then playing a blues scale to taper off the tension, until he creates tension again to propel himself into the following chorus. He begins anew his second chorus by phrasing on the blues before throwing himself again into the crafting of lines executed in double time.

[34] McPartland, 'Milt Jackson on Piano Jazz', (1991): http://www.npr.org/2013/01/07/168786059/milt-jackson-on-piano-jazz (accessed 25 August 2017).

Example 7-5. Excerpt, Jackson's solo, 'S.K.J.', mm. 1–12



It is plausible to argue that more conventional performances by blues artists influenced Jackson in treating his choruses as separate units. The lyrics in blues songs have an important weight and we see how chorus after chorus these conclude at the end of the twelve-bar section, before restarting at the beginning of the chorus. Jackson listened to the blues widely, as the following anecdotal story testifies: 'Ray Brown and I used to go into this restaurant at night, after work. Me or Ray would get a dollar's worth of nickels and just put a nickel after nickel in that jukebox, and listen to him [Charles Brown] play "Drifting Blues"'.[35]

Db was Jackson's favourite key. He remembered that he learned to play in Db in Detroit:

> One of my first gigs in Detroit was with a piano player who could not play in any other key than D flat. So that's what gave me the insight. Being such a difficult key, when I go to a town and pick up a rhythm section, the best way for me to find out

[35] Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 301.

> what they know is to give them blues in D-flat. That tells me right away how far I can go and how far I can't go.[36]

Necessity, as the proverb has it, is the mother of all invention. For Jackson, learning to play in every key was a major asset in his early career. Pianos, he remembered, were often in such bad condition and out of tune that other musicians were forced to transpose their repertoire to match them. He also recorded 'Now's the Time', which I discussed earlier, in D♭. This may constitute an odd choice for a blues that is customarily played in the key of F; however, transposing a song to another key signature constituted a 'voice' and a sonic signature for performers. It was also a way of demonstrating virtuosity. For example, it was common practice for improvising musicians to challenge themselves during jam sessions by performing a piece and moving key centres by; for instance, a semitone up or down every chorus or every eight bars. It is might also be helpful to consider the topography of the instrument. Playing in the key of D♭ may prove easier for some performers in terms of physical movement around the instrument because it allows space to navigate between the 'white' and 'black' keys of the vibraphone. Playing in C may often be considered harder because of the proximity of the keys.
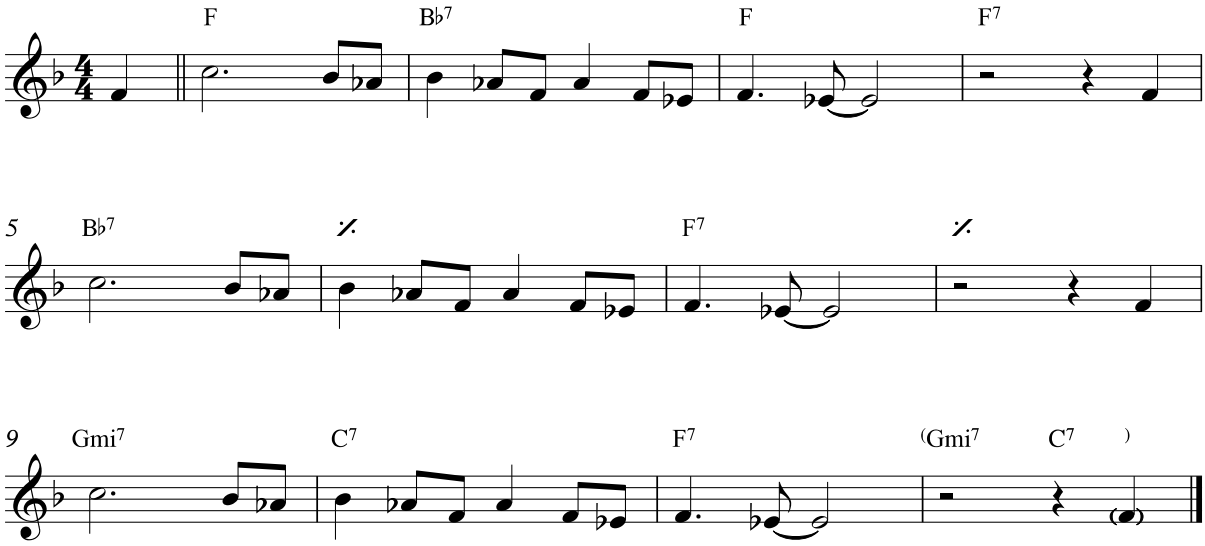
7.4.1 'Bag's Groove'

It would almost be impossible to write a chapter devoted to Jackson's blues persona without considering his most popular blues composition. I want to explore the possibility that, in true Afro-modernist fashion, 'Bag's Groove' served as a vehicle to straddle stylistic fences when Jackson recorded it in 1954 alongside pioneers Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, Kenny Clarke and Jackson's MJQ collaborator, bassist Percy Heath. The 1950s epitomised a moment of arrival for Jackson. He had already established himself as a leading voice on his instrument and the movement; one that built on decades of black cultural work and the result of musical innovation within black communities. But for all of Jackson's bebop ideals, there is no attempt to present his compositions in the bebop style of the kind that came to be common in the previous decade. As such 'Bag's Groove' signals a departure from earlier modes of performance and seemingly moves into a post-bop era. [37]

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[36] Mattingly, '1996 PAS Hall of Fame', 16.

[37] I feel compelled to comment on the copyrights of 'Bag's Groove'. Jackson remarked in several occasions that he sold the copyrights of 'Bag's Groove' and reclaimed them thirty years later. Jackson claimed that he didn't realise what he was doing at the time: 'I thought I was just signing a piece of paper to get a twenty-five dollar advance. That's what I mean—it's that lack of knowledge'. When I enquired about the copyrights of Jackson's compositions to the lawyer of Jackson's estate, asking whether Jackson had been 'misrepresented with regards to issues of intellectual property' back at the time, Mr Peter Matorin replied that my research was 'verging on

Example 7-6. Jackson's composition 'Bag's Groove'



Not having been trained as a composer or arranger, Jackson revealed that it was customary for him to compose a song in his head, then record it on a tape and ask someone to transcribe it.[38] Although he composed several more elaborate jazz compositions, he was best known for composing simple, riff-like blues themes. As such, 'Bag's Groove' is cast in the familiar twelve-bars blues pattern. Its riff-like melody was a typical practice in blues compositions and sets up a familiar performance rhetoric that predates much of the music of the 1940s and 1950s. This 12-bar structure is composed of a four-bar melody which is repeated three times (Example 7-6). The melody is composed of a simple play on a F minor pentatonic scale. The only variations consisted of Jackson playing the melody an octave or a fourth higher in the repetition of the theme. The harmonic construction of 'Bag's Groove' itself equally shows no pushing of compositional boundaries. The melody is played over a tonic F, inflected by a subdominant chord in the second bar (IV7). The melody remains static although a seventh chord enters in preparation for the move to IV7. The second phrase is repeated on the subdominant for two bars before it returns to the tonic. The alteration
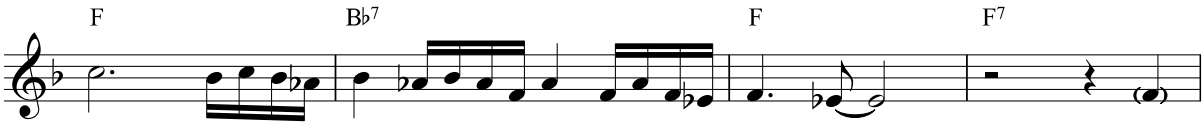
conjecture and yellow journalism rather than on actual facts'. He continued: 'I don't know where or how you are sourcing your book [thesis] but these statements are totally unfounded and fallacious'. (Email communication, 1 May 2015). Mr Matorin, who otherwise specialises in entertainment law and intellectual property, was obviously not only unaware of Jackson's interviews, but also of the fact that it was unfortunately common for African American artists to be misrepresented in record contracts. This fact was also noted by Jackson's widow, Sandra Jackson, noting that they spent a lot of money to get the rights back from Wemar music. Mrs Jackson suggested that Jackson's signature was forged and that a handwriting expert was called to assist the case. See Mattingly, '1996 PAS Hall of Fame', 16; Roulet, 'Milt Jackson', 88.

[38] McPartland, 'Milt Jackson on Piano Jazz'.
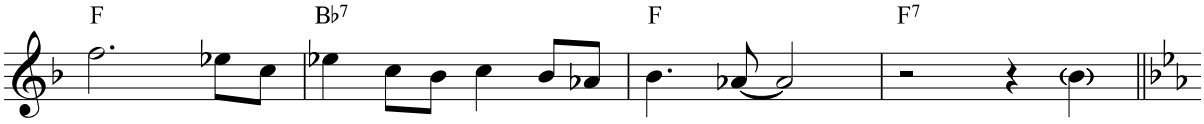
between I and IV allows for a different interpretation of the same melody. In the last repetition of the melody, the blues moves to the V dominant chord.

'Bag's groove' seems to possess both the qualities of communal enthusiasm and meditative solemnity. The simplicity of the melody lends itself to interpretation; Jackson performed this blues in several contexts and in a variety of ways. For example, in the 1952 take, Jackson performed the melody in a more embellished way (Example 7-7).[39] Other variations include harmonising the melody and splitting the voicing with other band members (Example 7-8). With the Modern Jazz Quartet, the vibist often stated the melody whilst the pianist of the group, John Lewis, followed the exposition of the theme in fugue-like articulation.

Example 7-7. Jackson's composition 'Bag's Groove' (embellished version)



Example 7-8. Jackson's composition 'Bag's Groove' (added voice)



The riff itself was not new to Jackson. The vibist performed it at the beginning of the second chorus in his solo over an E♭ blues called 'Bluesology' (Example 7-9).[40] This was common practice for improvising musicians as I have showed earlier (see chapter 4.3). Not only these riffs were part of their musical palette, but it is also fair to assume that some of these riffs were work in progress for improvising musicians and composers alike. For example, in this performance of 'Bag's Groove', in the second chorus of his solo Monk quickly gets into a mode of playing ascending sixth intervals that comprised the elements of a well-known composition of his, the blues 'Misterioso'.[41] Famously, Gillespie's used an extended version
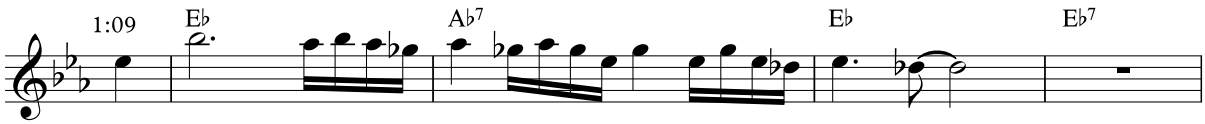
[39] 'Bag's Groove', *Wizard of the Vibes* (Blue Note LC 0133, 1952).

[40] I have been unable to determine the exact personnel on this track ('Bluesology') as it appears in several compilations of the early MJQ but also on a recording with vocalist Wini Brown dating in February 1949. Wini Brown, *Miss Brown For You* (Savoy SJL 1163).

[41] Thelonious Monk, *Genius of Modern Music, Vol. 1* (Blue Note BLP 1510).

of his coda on ‘I Can’t Get Started’ to compose the popular introduction for his version of Monk’s ‘Round Midnight’, recorded in February 1946.[42]

Example 7-9 . ‘Bag’s Groove’ theme in Jackson’s solo in ‘Bluesology’



The composition and performance presents challenges about its pedigree, and not only because of the historical moment in which it appeared. The overall feeling of the performance is rather different as it departs from the kinds of blues Jackson performed a decade earlier alongside Parker and Gillespie. The repetition of the theme three times over twelve bars departs from the more rigid version of the AAB pattern and perhaps the most fundamental quality grounded in African American cultural imperatives—one that dates to the ring shout. The call and response pattern, so prevalent in traditional blues structures, is missing as there is only the exposition of the ‘call’. Perhaps it is the absence of a two-line poetic scheme that reinforces this lack of closure. But in most of his blues compositions Jackson seems to resist some of the parameters set by conventional forms of blues and challenges the established ways of call and response found in more traditional forms. He also resists composing intricate melodies and structuring complex harmonic structures over twelve bars; this aesthetic was typical to bebop blues and of his during the 1940s.[43] What is it, then, that makes this composition so representative of Jackson and defining of a specific moment in cultural history? Gospel music had a profound influence on the vibist and this ‘missing response’ may be a hint, suggestive of a direct influence in his compositions. The ‘call’ in the blues is the more laid-back exposition of a theme whilst the ‘response’ the more expressive one (noting its appearance on a dominant chord). In gospel music, the preacher often sings on a pedal in freeform before offering a ‘response’ in a chorus. A performance by esteemed Detroit group The Clark Sisters ‘Is My Living in Vain’ is one such example: although the lyrics have slight variations, the song starts on a continuous reiteration of the

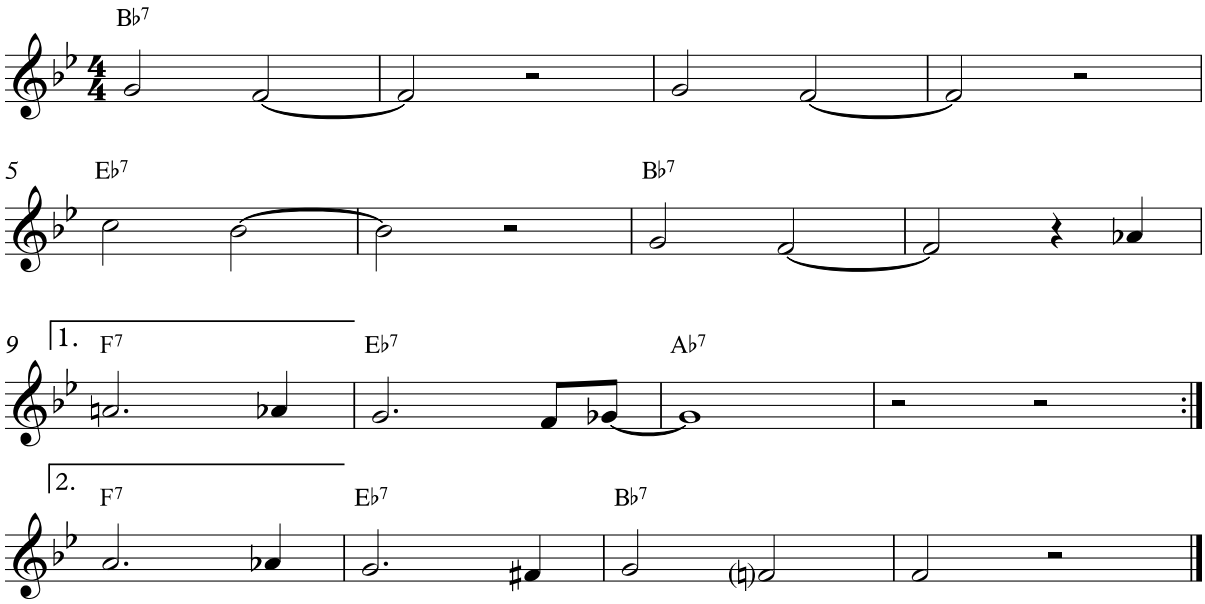
[42] ‘I Can’t Get Started’, Goodman, Benny, *et al.*, *The Jazz Makers* (Columbia CL 1036), NYC, 9 January 1945. ‘Round Midnight’, Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Berman, Fats Navarro, *Modern Jazz Trumpets* (Spotlite (E) SPJ 132). Electro Broadcast Studios, Glendale, CA, 7 February 7, 1946.

[43] See for example Jackson’s album *Roll’Em Bags* (Savoy–MG 12042)

same four-bar melody.[44] This kind of treatment allows Jackson performer to be, so to speak, in two places at once.

To consider advancements in jazz during the 1950s we ought to consider, as Ramsey proposes, 'what modernity [was] to African Americans at the historical moment under consideration'.[45] Whatever the motivation, a sort of compositional economy typified the work of many jazz blues compositions in the decade. Miles Davis's album *Kind of Blue*, is certainly a reference to his process of being playful with the blues style, something also evident by the intricacy and nature of the many blues compositions in this album.[46] Composed by Davis in 1959, 'Freddie Freeloader' is one such case (Example 7-10). The melody is minimal and the chord progression typical of a blues composition until the turnaround, when it resolves to an A♭7. Not only the resolution of the tune but also the improvisations suggest that the gravitas here is not in the traditional blue and minor pentatonic scales but rather in the higher register. There are many more examples suggestive of this kind of cultural work in the music of Davis but also others.

Example 7-10 . 'Freddie Freeloader' by Miles Davis



[44] 'Is My Living in Vain' *The Dynamic Clark Sisters with Mattie Moss Clark* (New Birth Records – New 7056). Recorded live at Baily Cathedral- Detroit, Michigan. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWtrpuPHDcM (accessed 9 November 2017).

[45] Ramsey, *Race Music*, 97.
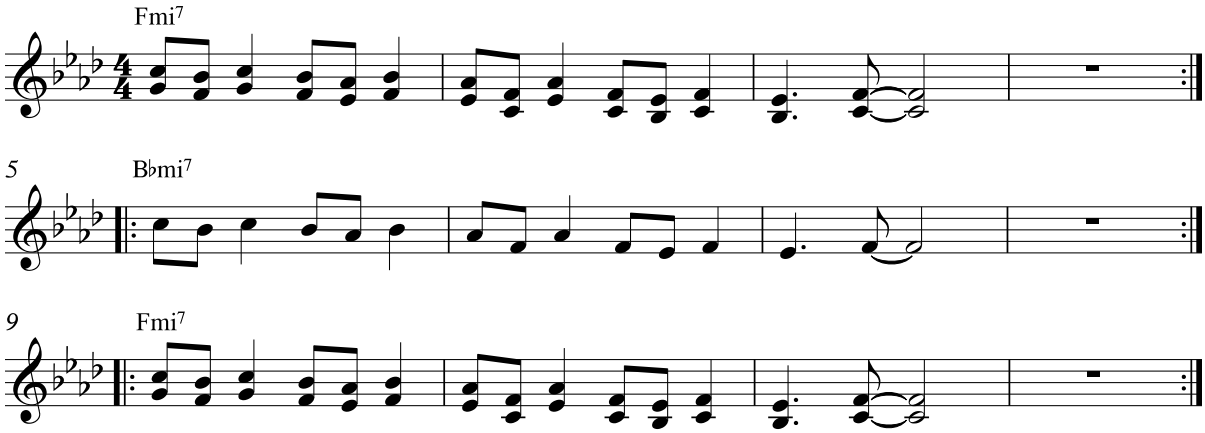
[46] Miles Davis, *Kind Of Blue* (Columbia CL 1355).

'Bag's Groove' predates Davis' work in *Kind of Blue* by many years but another form of compositional economy was already observable in Jackson's composition. The riff repeats itself three times and the harmony moves from a tonic, to a subdominant and a dominant, which results to a change in colour. As in 'S.K.J.' (Example 7-1), variation is achieved by changing the sonic tapestry of the accompanying and the overall sound changes because the melody has a different intervallic relationship with the underlying harmony. There is no definitive version of this blues and the accompaniment may vary. In soloing over this tune, for example, Jackson often played through the form in plainer blues form, but in other occasions he implies a ii-minor to V dominant progression or, as I have demonstrated in chapters five and six, more elaborate chord substitutions that were representative of bebop musicians (such as iii-VI in bar 8, leading to the turnaround). There is also a sense of irony in the compositional economy of this blues. I described in the previous section how Jackson's treatment of each improvised chorus as separate in many ways resembles the story telling quality of more traditional blues forms. And yet his blues compositions seem to remain static because of the repetition of the main riff three times, as well as the lack of any melodic variation.

This sort of thematic repetition was championed in later years by musicians. For example, John Coltrane's composition 'Blues Minor' is also a riff-based melody on a minor pentatonic scale (Example 7-11).[47] The harmony changes from an F minor (tonic), to a subdominant (B♭), to an F minor chord. Coltrane's economical approach goes even further: the changes in colour are achieved only by bass movement. B♭7 is essentially the same chord as the tonic F minor but with an added bass note. The reason why the melody does sound fresh is because of Coltrane's ingenuity to play with the contour of the melody. Coltrane introduces the suspended fourth interval, which creates an added colour to the melody.

[47] John Coltrane, *The John Coltrane Quartet – African/Brass* (Impulse! A-6), Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, June 7, 1961.

Example 7-11 . 'Blues Minor' by John Coltrane



If the blues was for African American artists a means to expression, exploration and discovery, then musicians found new ways to tell new stories by being playful with the components of this versatile form of music making. In this way blues artists built on a tradition of performance practice that extended the style. Ernest Borneman explained in a classic essay from the 1940s that

> While the whole European tradition strives for regularity—of pitch, of time, of timbre and of vibrato—the African tradition strives precisely for the negation of these elements. In language, the African tradition aims at circumlocution rather than at exact definition. The direct statement is considered crude and unimaginative; the veiling of all contents in ever-changing paraphrases is considered the criterion of intelligence and personality. In music, the same tendency towards obliquity and ellipsis is noticeable: no note is attached straight; the voice or instrument always approaches it from above or below, plays around the implied pitch without ever remaining any length of time, and departs from it without ever having committed itself to a single meaning. The timbre is veiled and paraphrased by constantly changing vibrato, tremolo and overtone effects. The timing and accentuation, finally, are not *stated*, but *implied* or *suggested*. The musician challenges himself to find and hold his orientation while denying or withholding all signposts.[48]

Despite the somehow exaggerated language, we see how the blues were a socially maintained framework in which participants exhibit certain competency through their highly-individualised elaborations of certain schemata. Jackson continued to celebrate a tradition without concealing his imagination.

Jackson's 1954 performance of 'Bag's Groove' is idiosyncratic in many ways as it mingles elements that would otherwise not necessary exist under the same musical roof. The

[48] Quoted in Susan McClary, *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 35-36.

band's arrangement treats the tune somewhere between the subtler, 'cooler' sounds of Davis, and Monk's more dissonant playing, accompanied by Clarke's known rhythmic explosions on the drums. Davis' solo is in the zeitgeist of the sound which came with his later collaborations with arranger Gil Evans. There is an absence of piano comping behind his solo, reportedly because Davis could not stand Monk's idiosyncratic playing. The reasons for this division of sonic labour became famous and the recording quickly became a classic.[49] Monk's playing in 'Bag's Groove' is in many ways also typical of his. The pianist does what he does best and is playful with the material at hand. Jackson recalled that Monk had some of the most unusual characteristics he witnessed in a musician; he could take a mistake and toy with it to the point that it became a musical idea.[50] Intriguingly, in his seventh chorus Monk builds his solo entirely on the idea of playing a minor second (E and F), then letting on of the two keys up.[51]

Jackson's solo is a fine example of all the improvisational devices I have hitherto identified, including usage of the related diminished, pivoting on the diminished and the ample stylistic traits of the music of the time. Other performance strategies include the employment of rhythmic manipulation to delay or anticipate harmonic resolutions, grace-note embellishments, octave shifts (a strategy typical of many blues and gospel performers), patterns, playing the blues and riff-like phrasing. Although his sound had not yet reached the perfection the world of jazz would witness in the years to come but here the recording is significantly improved in terms of sound quality (comparing to, for example, recordings made in the 1940s).[52] In many ways, the axis of the three main soloists sets the tone and pace of three distinct styles in jazz of the time: bebop, hard-bop and the more laid-back sounds of third stream music. The musical juxtaposition between Davis' laid-back performance, Monk's dissonance, and Jackson's rhetoric rooted in the blues and bebop—at moments

[49] See for instance Richard Williams, *The Man in the Green Shirt: Miles Davis* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1993), 54.

[50] Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 300.

[51] Ran Blake, 'Lesson: The Monk Piano Style', (July 1982): http://www.keyboardmag.com/artists/1236/the-thelonious-monk-piano-style/63993 (accessed 10 November 2017).

[52] The choice of recording studio was also important in this development. Jackson recorded some of his finest records at Rudy Van Gelder's studio. Van Gelder was responsible for defining unique sonic environments. Located in New Jersey, the studio was known for its exceptional sound quality. From around 1952 recordings were made by Van Gelder for commercial release in the living-room of his parents' house at 25 Prospect Avenue in Hackensack, New Jersey, a house that had been built with the intention of doubling as a recording studio. In 1959, Van Gelder moved to a new facility in Englewood Cliffs; the new structure, designed by architect David Henken, was inspired by the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. The studio bore some resemblance to a chapel; its 39-foot ceilings and fine acoustics resulted in the studio being described as a 'temple of music'. Ira Gitler, 'Vangelder's Studio'. JazzTimes (2001): accessed September 17, 2017, https://jazztimes.com/news/vangelders-studio/.

seeming to rally his musicians around him—is suggestive of the hybridity that had shaped Jackson's musical outputs. It is also suggestive of the tension between tradition and innovation (or, as Susan McClary proposed, convention and expression) which has seemed to characterise many achievements in jazz around the same time.[53] The interaction between these two impulses provided Jackson with a creative framework in which to make music.

The cultural work that arrived in the 1950s reveals much of the historical particularities of jazz movements. Comparisons are often necessary as there are striking differences between Jackson's cultural work in 'Bag's Groove' and that in other work around the same time. For example, his record *Meet Milt Jackson* is a curious reference to the vibist's skills that includes tracks recorded with saxophonist Thompson and are disseminated across the records *Roll'Em Bags*, *Jackson's Ville* and *Jazz Skyline*. Like most of these titles, 'Bag's Groove' certainly makes an unmistakable reference to Jackson's musical skills. It would be wrong, however, to assume that the blues character at the time was gendered as essentially male. Jackson's equally titled many blues he composed after female names, which was also most probably incidental. I have argued previously that the blues provided female musicians for the possibility to assert themselves in a male-dominated jazz world (section 7.3), but it is important to remember that on many occasions African American women were the bearers of black culture.[54] Jackson's references to his mother's singing and his recollection of her as a devout woman suggest that she had an important role as the bearer of black vernacular culture in the family. The blending of these sensibilities come into play in the vibist's work and are suggestive of larger patterns of cultural synthesis.

Because of this, with respect to the complex relation between gender and performance style in jazz, it is impossible to reduce jazz to a fixed doctrine of political position, such as those described by, for example, gender studies. For further proof of this complexity, we might look for answer in blues styles. Until the 1950s, and along with institutions such as the *Defender* and national Baptist conventions, the blues tied the African-American South together to the African-American North, in a form of social-musical loop.[55] Female singers understood well this relationship and through them the blues became the most popular

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[53] See Susan McClary, *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 34.

[54] Ramsey, *Race Music*, 84, 94. For a thorough discussion of the complex connection between gender and performance style see Ajay Heble and Gillian Siddall, 'Nice Work if You Can Get it: Women in Jazz', in *Landing on the Wrong Note: Jazz, Dissonance and Critical Practice*, ed. Ajay Heble (London, New York: Routledge, 2000).

[55] Brothers, *Louis Armstrong*, 54.

articulation of working-class black identity. Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Ida Cox, Ethel Waters were among the first commercial successes of the blues. They blended modes of performances that had they roots in the church, rural entertainment, vaudeville and other urban popular idioms. Their music drew a boundary between white and black cultural production, while combining vernacular tradition with urban sophistication.[56] In a society as divided as the U.S.A. at the turn of the previous century, to be a black woman was to suffer double oppression, from which culture and devotion offered one of the few avenues of escape. As Allan Moore notes 'this opportunity may seem paradoxical until we recall, as Charles Keil observed […], that while black men were seen to pose a threat to white women, black women presented a sexual appeal to white men'.[57] This presence, Moore points out, received support from the suffragette movement; both women's enfranchisement and the first classic blues recording date from the 1920.[58]

'Bag's Groove' left a lasting impression to audiences, making it unavoidable for Jackson not to perform it. It was perhaps for this reason that Jackson composed another blues that referenced his most popular blues song. Released in 1957 in the album *Bags and Flutes*, 'Bag's New Groove' so obviously refers to Jackson's most popular composition, and shares many characteristics with Jackson's composing strategies which I have discussed up to this point.[59] But it also departs from 'Bag's Groove' in several ways. The theme is composed with a start on a major fifth ascending leap—so clearly a reference to 'Bag's Groove' and typical of his performance practices that I have articulated in the previous chapters (Example 7-12). The remaining of the melody is equally playful on the original composition. The striking difference is that, although the theme is repeated three times over twelve bars, the harmonic accompaniment changes and is more elaborate. Also, Jackson's solo is introduced with a tag played by all members of the group (Example 7-14). This is repeated in the second chorus of his solo, which required from Jackson to lead his improvisation into the melodic line played in unison with other band members (Example 7-14).

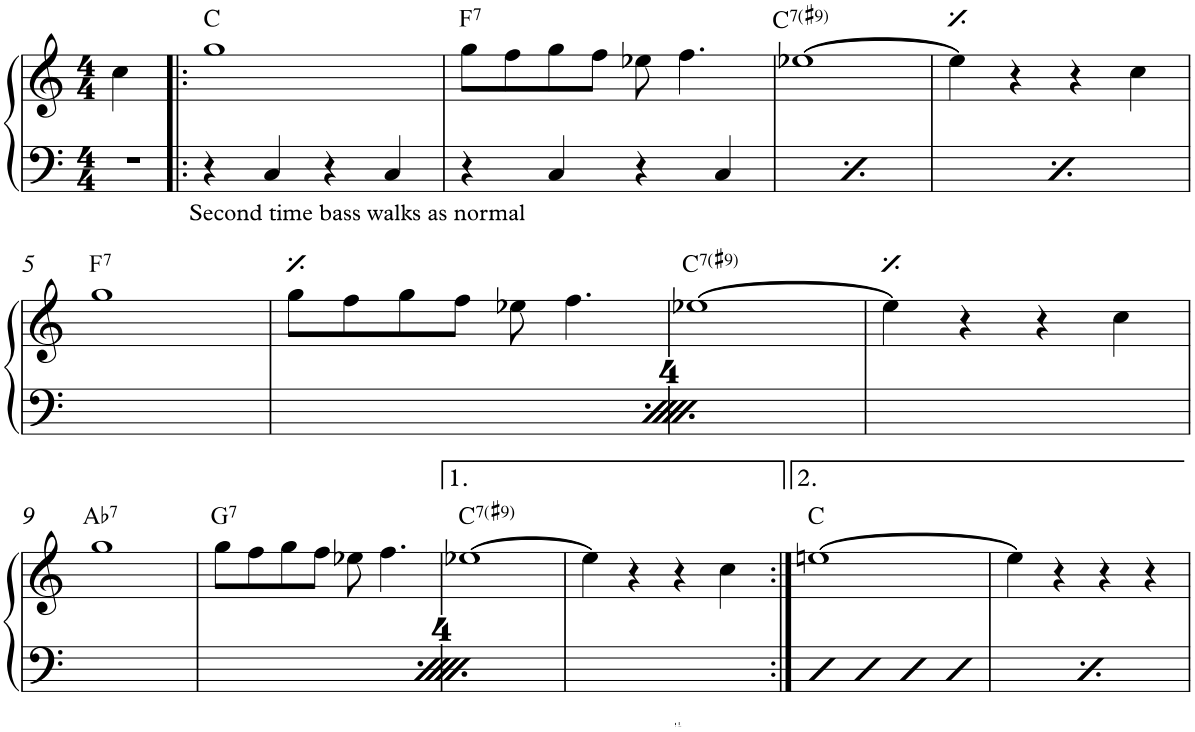
[56] Ibid.

[57] Moore, 'Surveying the Field', 4.

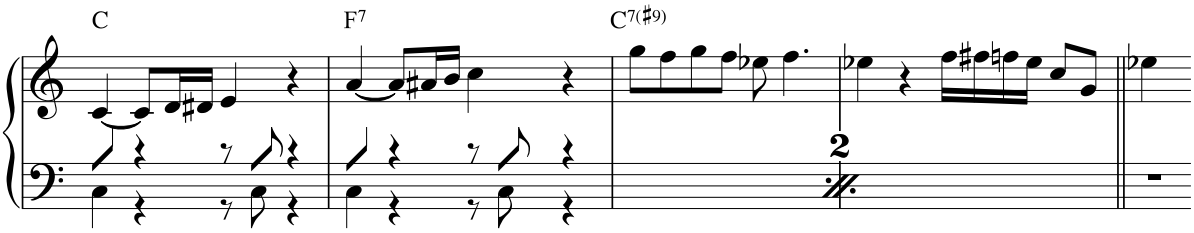
[58] Ibid.

[59] Milt Jackson, *Bags and Flutes* (Atlantic LP 1294, SD 1294).
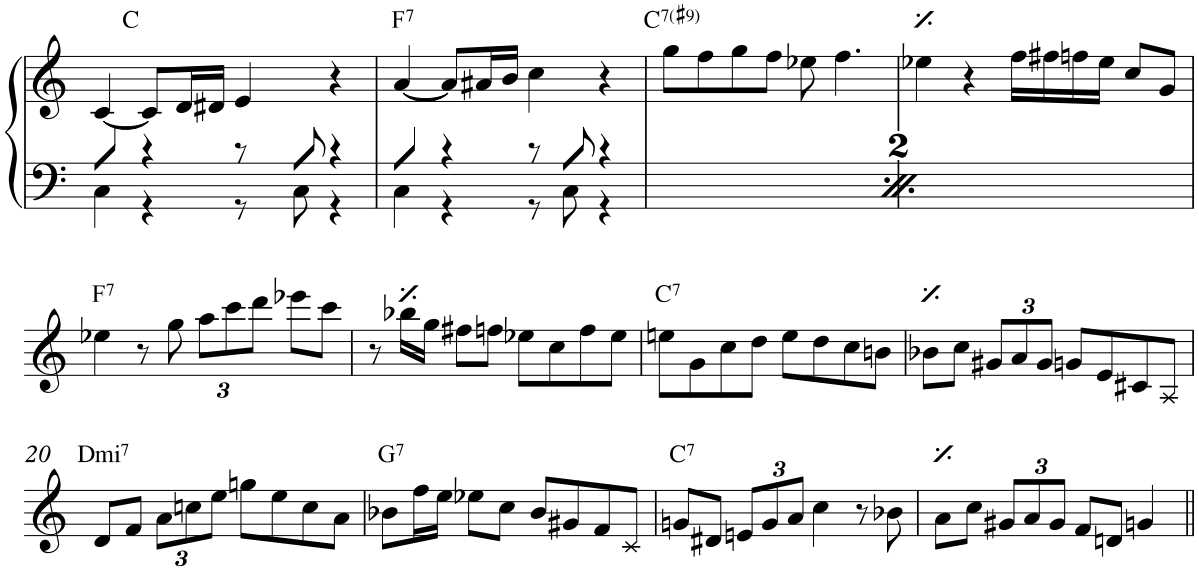
Example 7-12 . ‘Bag’s New Groove’ by Milt Jackson



Example 7-13 . ‘Bag’s New Groove’ unison line at the start of the chorus



Example 7-14 . ‘Bag’s New Groove’ by Milt Jackson, first chorus



Jackson continued to compose blues themes which he recorded until the end of his career. Like many of his blues compositions, ‘Bag’s Groove’ served as a vehicle for improvisations, used repeatedly by musicians, and mimicked constantly by vibraphone players around the world. It is perhaps not only the music itself, but also the story that is indissolubly linked with ‘Bag’s Groove’ that has generated so much success to this specific blues theme. It is its ambiguity and melodic simplicity, its connotation of African American cultural work in an urban centre, its echo of Jackson’s roots in the black church and his pedigree working along pioneers in this music.

8 CODA: JAZZIN' UP THE CLASSICS AND REQUIEM FOR A HEAVYWEIGHT

By the end of the 1950s Jackson had been a well-established figure in the jazz scene for over a decade. As rock n' roll and rhythm and blues, two new related styles of pop dance music gradually overtook jazz's economic clout, Jackson continued to develop as a jazz artist in diverse ways. He worked extensively with big bands and studio orchestras; arrangers sought to provide suitable accompaniment for the vibraphone's intriguing frequencies and his celebrated ballad playing. His favourite record of his own, *The Ballad Artistry of Milt Jackson* is one such example.[1] New projects also included experimenting with different grooves and sonic environments. For example, his first album as a leader for CTI records, *Sunflower*, recorded in 1972, deserves special praise as it departs from the more mainstream jazz settings he was accustomed to. In *Sunflower* Jackson collaborated not only with a label distinguished by a groove oriented repertoire, but also with a younger generation of players who were quickly charting their own territories in jazz, pushing Jackson to advance in even broader contexts than his discography to date.[2] But while the sonic environments changed, Jackson's playing remained mostly the same. His improvisations undeniably continued to be of relevance to the musical outputs of the 1940s and 1950s, and he continued to perform music primarily within that aesthetic into the 1960s and 1970s. 'I cannot deny that I'm more partial to that era [bebop] than to any other era in my musical career'.[3]

Other collaborations also deserve praise. Under the auspice of composer and pianist John Lewis, Jackson's work with the MJQ is perhaps the most acclaimed means with which the vibist continued to make music that challenged established norms and boundaries. The group sought resolutions between hegemonic conventions in jazz and compositional ingenuity, and embodied an emergent identity that affirmed the diversity of the African American experience. Examples include music for film, work that reference commedia dell'arte and fugue-like works that are of great musical, historical, and cultural interest. The group's repertoire was important in the way European audiences understood the MJQ as a signifier of quality in jazz, but the reasons for which the Continent embraced Jackson's work

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[1] Milt Jackson, *The Ballad Artistry of Milt Jackson* (Atlantic LP 1342). Arranged by Quincy Jones, this album was recorded in New York, 1 May 1959, and 9 and 10 September 1959. Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 301.

[2] The personnel included pianist Herbie Hancock, trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, bassist Ron Carter, drummer Billy Cobham and arranger Don Sebesky. Milt Jackson, *Sunflower* (CTI 6024). Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 12 and 13 December 1972.

[3] Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 300.

with the MJQ (briefly outlined in section 3.4) may be open to debate. Jackson himself contended that Europeans were more appreciative of jazz because of the better music education that they received at the time.[4] Following the acceptance of jazz as serious art, reliable stereotypes flourished, especially the idea that European audiences had better insight into the MJQ's aesthetic values. For example, at the quartet's 1964 appearance on the BBC's TV programme, *Jazz 625* (a show that signalled a major moment in the history of jazz in Britain as well as the history of BBC music television), the remarkably varied repertoire included Lewis' compositions for the film *A Milanese Story*, an arrangement of Bach's Fugue in A minor (BWV 947), a blues that showcases the more spirited soloist in the group, Milt Jackson, and an up-tempo take of 'The Sheriff'; forcing the presenter Steve Race to note that 'there is always a feeling of shape and purpose about anything played by the Modern Jazz Quartet'.[5] Questions of institutional and social contexts are largely exposed when moments from the quartet's appearances on television are disinterred.[6]

I noted in my introduction that, despite his popularity in musical circles, Jackson's battle lines were drawn along other issues and especially with regards to his work with the Modern Jazz Quartet. The public presentation of the group, for example, created much controversy. Its members dress code was often critiqued by commentators of the time, such as by Ralph Ellison who famously noted: 'there is even a morbid entertainment value in watching the funereal posturing of the Modern Jazz Quartet'.[7] Previously, a 1957 *Esquire* article compared the group's appearance to that of 'a splinter group … [of] Baptist ministers', before describing the quartet as 'dedicated and serious'.[8] Ed Sachs described Lewis's arrival in a 'mortician's uniform' to a 1959 interview, before commenting on his 'calm, poised and

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[4] Ibid., 300.

[5] Modern Jazz Quartet, *Jazz 625* (1964), transcription by this author. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JrcHIJEEIg (accessed 13 November 2017). The choice of the BWV 947 is odd. David Schulenberg explains that the attractive aspect of BWV 947 is its neatness, because of the 'immediate repetitions of simple motives and the regular two-measure intervals between entries in the two main expositions'. This structural quality would render the composition easier to adapt by the MJQ; however the work's authorship has been questioned. Schulenberg notes that BWV 947 is 'almost certainly not his [J.S. Bach's] work' See David Schulenberg, *The Keyboard Music of J.S. Bach* (Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2006), 440.

[6] Other appearances by the quartet include, but are not limited to, *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*, Season 3, Episode 562 (17 December 1964) and Season 8, Episode (24 April 1970); *The Flip Wilson Show*, Season 2, Episode 15 (30 December 1971).

[7] Ellison, 'On Bird, Bird-Watching and Jazz', *The Saturday Review* (1962), available online at http://www.unz.org/Pub/SaturdayRev-1962jul28-00047 (accessed 7 April 2017). Ellison's article is reprinted in: Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 221-32.

[8] 'The Slipped Disk', *Esquire*, 12. Quoted in Coady, *John Lewis and the Challenge of "Real" Black Music*, 76.

agreeable' manners.[9] John Wilson remarked that many in the jazz community felt the formal dress of the MJQ had given them the appearance of 'bearded undertakers'.[10] The reference to the dress code is intriguing particularly because it was not uncommon for jazz musicians to wear suits in both everyday life and performances.[11] Especially from the end of the 1930s and with the rise of the hipster movement, jazz musicians were often characterised by a prominent stylistic panache, and a dress code that generated much analysis of representational aesthetics in the jazz scene. Jackson admired the way that the Ellington and Lunceford orchestras, for example, dressed up. He discussed their presentational manners in terms of being 'an elegant gentleman'; something he paralleled with classical music and brought dignity to the music, which he felt had been lost.[12] Alas, references to the group's façade continued to serve critics keen to interrogate the ways in which the MJQ appeared to be abandoning African American traditions through its affiliation with white cultural products.

Throughout his career, Jackson never gave up performing straight ahead jazz with his own groups and enjoyed playing in a mixture of performance settings with the MJQ; yet, the interaction between these two impulses provided to cultural commentators a space in which to criticise the creative opportunities that such an agreement generated. Notably, commentators seemed to be drawn by the contradictions between Lewis and Jackson. De Micheal, for example, writing for a 1961 concert summary commented that

> There is much of contrast between Lewis and Jackson. It can be seen in the music they write. Jacksons' is usually more simple and takes the form blues or the 32-bar song much more often than does Lewis'. While Lewis appears to like formality, Jackson does not. 'I don't feel comfortable in formal clothes or formal settings,' he said. 'I dig being completely relaxed'.[13]

Such views accumulated to a never-ending debate about the vibist's unhappy existence in the MJQ, which often overshadowed the group's collective work. Ray Brown argued that Jackson's hands 'are tied in this group; he'll wind up quitting too'.[14] Acting as his manager

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[9] Ed Sachs, 'John Lewis, Man and Musician', *Downbeat* 26, no. 3 (1959), 18.

[10] John S Wilson, 'Extremes of Jazz Meet Nightly', *The New York Times*, 3 November 1960, 47.

[11] See for example Ellington and his orchestra, or Louis Armstrong who, when younger, had named his tuxedo 'my old Roast Beef'. Quoted in Coady, *John Lewis and the Challenge of "Real" Black Music*, 77. I have noted the visual aspects of 'bebop' and the dress code of musicians earlier.

[12] Transcription of an interview with Arthur Dawkins for the 'Howard University Jazz Oral History Project', 5.

[13] DeMicheal, 'Jackson of the MJQ', 20.

[14] Robert G Reisner, 'Milt Jackson', in *The Jazz Titans, Including the Parlance of Hip* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977), 77.

towards the end of the vibist's career, Brown maintained that the members of the MJQ got tired and Jackson fed up with the band's one-nighters, in which Lewis insisted on playing not only the same arrangements but also in the same order.[15] Writing for the *New York Times* in 1960, Wilson reported that the jazz community had started to accuse Lewis of 'stifling Mr. Jackson' and of 'being devoid of any jazz instinct himself'.[16] And yet this was a pianist whose career included recording with pioneers Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis and Sonny Stitt, and whose notes on the back sleeve of *Fontessa* called for MJQ performances reminiscent of the Basie band rather than a chamber ensemble. While acknowledging the importance of his work with the MJQ, Jackson eventually communicated his disappointment at the fact that Lewis suppressed a sense of swing, which Jackson saw as something characteristic of African American music-making.[17] He eventually disbanded the MJQ for financial reasons and a need for artistic freedom.[18] Of course, one may argue that similar tensions are often endemic in band leading situations and, given this context, it is hardly surprising that rumours suggested an unrest between the two men.[19] But audiences love a good story and the aggregate of these events led to the reception of Jackson to be confined by Lewis's 'formalistic and apparently somewhat effete approach'.[20] In the aftermath of the group's break, Lewis accused Jackson of being short-sighted.[21]

Public assertions that Jackson's playing was confined by Lewis's more conservative approach were misleading. If anything, the musical tension that Lewis's structures often commanded allowed Jackson to shine when he was given space to improvise. 'The music was so good for so long', the bass player of the group, Percy Heath, noted:

> I remember standing there between Milt Jackson and John Lewis and wondering if I should really be getting paid for having this much fun. There will never be another

[15] Richard Palmer, 'Milt Jackson Reconsidered, Part III', *Jazz Journal* 63, no. 3 (March 2010), 10.

[16] Wilson, 'Extremes of Jazz Meet Nightly', 47.

[17] See for instance Faddis, 'Lessons from Bags', 300. In Woodard, Jackson also argues that Kenny Clark left the band because he did not like the music of Bach that Lewis brought in for the quartet to play. Woodard, 'Milt Jackson: Elegant Vibrations', Jazz Times (September 1999): https://jazztimes.com/features/milt-jackson-elegant-vibrations/ (accessed 3 February 2016).

[18] Bourne, 'Bop Baroque and the Blues', 24-27.

[19] I am grateful to Mervyn Cooke for this incisive comment which appeared on an early draft of this thesis outline in my annual review (2014).

[20] Palmer, 'Milt Jackson Reconsidered, Part I', 7.

[21] John S Wilson, 'Modern Jazz Quartet is Disbanding', *New York Times*, 24 November 1974.

> Milt Jackson. I wonder if he ever realized that maybe it was "that Bach stuff" that made the music so special.[22]

The location of value in Lewis's music as assimilating a compositional ethos more immediately associated with traditional forms of concert hall music must also be read with scepticism. Lewis promoted music that incorporated improvisation and composition 'as seamlessly as possible, so you won't know what's improvised and what's not'. He explained: 'It took a long time for that to happen [in the quartet], but that was the goal we worked toward achieving'.[23] This has also been a characteristic in some of Duke Ellington's music, as for example noted by Cooke.[24] Not only it is questionable whether the conditions in the quartet deemed the controversy necessary but, as Palmer rightly remarked, the debate was also the aggregate of the MJQ-members giving cloudy, often convoluted, interviews; also, as I pointed out earlier, commentators were too fond of an ideological either/or attitude, rather than the more suited both/and approach[25]. The mere facts tell us that Jackson enjoyed the best of two musically interlocking careers and that by the end of the 1950s, he was indomitably established on two distinguished, yet intimately related platforms. In charting these issues Palmer suggested that the MJQ did well to split when they did because—despite the teeming new audiences for jazz in the 70s that caused the Dave Brubeck, Miles Davis and Benny Goodman bands to regroup—the MJQ was in danger of becoming a noble *cul de sac*.[26]

Jackson may have expressed his disappointment at the fact that the MJQ was known for finding inspiration in nineteenth-century repertoire and concepts of thematic unity, but the group was not the first to introduce classical allusions and adapt concert hall classics to its repertoire.[27] Quite on the contrary, in fact, we see that in many MJQ performances there was often very little arrangement being done; and it is odd to consider their repertoire as highly organised at a time when composers were transforming jazz into an art that demanded equal respect with other forms of Western at music. Instead, it seems more reasonable to argue that the MJQ's success was much more the product of a balancing act rather than of formal organisation; one deriving from the members' unique sound. This has also been noted about

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[22] Zwerin, 'Percy Heath Recalls the Modern Jazz Quartet', (25 November 2003): http://www.culturekiosque.com/jazz/portrait/mjq.html (accessed 11 October).

[23] Quoted in Coady, *John Lewis and the Challenge of "Real" Black Music*, 81.

[24] See Cooke, 'Jazz Among the Classics, and the Case of Duke Ellington', 160.

[25] Palmer, 'Milt Jackson Reconsidered, Part I', 7.

[26] Palmer, 'Milt Jackson Reconsidered, Part III', 11.

[27] For further example of adaptations of concert hall music by jazz musicians see: Cooke, 'Jazz Among the Classics, and the Case of Duke Ellington', 163.

the music of Ellington, whose work included a combination of creative processes that range from a sonorous organisation to pre-existing formal structures.[28] Similarly, in comparing the MJQ with Ellington's orchestra, Martin Williams argued that 'the group's achievements had as much to do with the developing talents of its membership as of its leadership'.[29] Lewis had a fair responsibility for shaping the music of the quartet, but it was the strength of personalities, imprinted on all the material of the MJQ, that was the force to lend the group's interpretations a coherent character. The group was rich in Jackson's lustrous sound, Lewis's minimalistic and well considered playing, the group's grounding in Heath's bass and the colourful and orchestral contributions of Connie Kay on the drums and percussion. These visceral qualities cut through the audiences; especially in improvised passages when sonority and form were equally paramount in the organisation of the group. Such entelechy further distanced the quartet from classical, more traditional, processes of musical production, often associated with the concert hall.

To reinforce this, we may take a brief historical digression which tells us of another story in the world of jazz. Just as important for my purpose, throughout his career Ellington was preoccupied with musical issues that went beyond arranging and composing for his band. He was concerned with musical craftsmanship, education, intellectualism and, at a later stage, became more outspoken about civil rights in the United States. As Cooke explains, Ellington became concerned with jazz as a music that had grown to become scholastic. On such premises, he was promoted to audiences whose needs demanded a great artist—a genius—and, most importantly, his orchestra was marketed as a class attraction.[30] In the spirit of European classicist models, this combination of activities elevated Ellington to the status of North America's greatest composer. This scenario also underlined much of the MJQ's work, which in turn was quickly packaged for consumption by European audiences who developed an appetite for merged identities. A comparison with the Ellington orchestra might be useful because, in the context of the quartet, Jackson filled well the shoes of the 'genius-archetype-role', although, agreeably, in different ways than the gifted composer and band leader. The interaction of the 'legitimate' Lewis with the 'spirited' Jackson somehow appealed to a variety of audiences. There are ample similar examples in the world of jazz. Who can disregard the work of Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson and Eubie Blake,

[28] Ibid., 160.

[29] Williams, *Jazz Masters in Transition, 1957*-1969, 161.

[30] Ibid., 172. Also see John Howland, *Duke Ellington Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

crafted in the likes of European piano repertoire, or the barriers that, among others, James Reese Europe broke in the concert hall?

As early jazz took shape, pioneering musicians moved quickly from traditional compositional norms and structures. Some of the most celebrated jazz composers became explorers in search of new sound worlds. As early as the 1920s French impressionism crept in and remained a strong influence on jazz for many years to come; a two-way and mutually beneficiary process as Deborah Mawer demonstrated.[31] In their highly innovative sound worlds, for example, Gil Evans and Ellington evidence what Cooke describes as 'sonority as an organisational force'.[32] Ellington studied Delius, Charlie Parker was famously outspoken about his admiration of Hindemith, Bartók and Stravinsky (and wanted to study with the latter), whilst Miles Davis's himself noted that his interest in modes was inspired by the likes of Ravel and Khatchaturian. I have already demonstrated in this thesis that substitutions based on a diminished axis, often associated with Bartók's music, were common in the music of modernist musicians of the 1940s; the resultant diminished schemas that were repeated by improvising musicians played an important role in the forming of the theoretical frameworks of Barry Harris. Equally, augmented axis substitutions are often pointed out in John Coltrane's harmonic routes. Cooke also highlights Cecil Taylor's knowledge of Webern and, once more, Stravinsky, as well as the influence of Grieg on Willie 'The Lion' Smith, and Debussy on Bix Beiderbecke's composition *In a Mist* (1927).[33] Musicians were adding to their pallete from classical influences; in time jazz grew to be so esoteric and complex in its technical procedures that it had become just as elitist as the classics. The works of Claude Thornhill, Stan Kenton and Charles Mingus only partly complement this list.

Correspondingly, and from the other side of the fence, some of the twentieth century's most celebrated composers sought jazz for study or as an appreciation outside their norms. Among the countless examples, Copland's praise of Ellington's *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue* testifies to this.[34] Stravinsky's *Piano Rag Music* and *Ebony Concerto* and Bernstein's *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs* (the two last written for the Woody Herman Orchestra though the Bernstein was premiered by Goodman) are further examples. Williams suggested that there is a Brahms caprice that might have been influenced by American minstrel music, and an

[31] Mawer, *From Debussy to Brubeck*.

[32] Cooke, 'Jazz Among the Classics, and the Case of Duke Ellington', 158.

[33] See Ibid., 161-63.

[34] Ibid.

eighteenth-century Scarlatti sonata that sounds like Meade 'Lux' Lewis.[35] He included Ives and Milhaud in his list of twentieth century composers inspired by jazz and proposed that Milhaud's *La Création du Monde* was in fact one of the most successful in borrowing from jazz. The clear-cut distinction between jazz as improvised music, and classical as composed, intellectual and requiring technical competence, was quickly disregarded.[36] Until the rise of modernism diverted attention towards more esoteric considerations, musicians in the seventeenth and eighteen centuries were required to improvise in diverse musical frameworks (cadenzas, elaborate melodic decorations).[37] But even in much twentieth-century, Western art, music, detailed predetermination and aleatoric techniques produce similar results to the work of certain free-jazz artists of the 1960s.

The point of all this is that most notable jazz musicians, hand in hand with other twentieth-century composers, moved away from dubious labels in pursuit of artistic exploration, in search for independence from allegedly inappropriate aesthetic considerations. Amid all this musical progress it would be difficult to label the MJQ's adaptation of classical formal frameworks as highly original. The arrangements hint at efforts for organic coherence and classicist thematic development, as the use of counterpoint and fugal passages testify, which efforts were not always successful and did not serve the MJQ adequately. Some added very little to the sonority of the compositions and, unavoidably, a question arises: why was it that the MJQ sought these specific forces from the classical repertoire and, why did these compositional processes generate so much controversy?

An obvious answer would be that the quartet attempted to tackle the lack of 'organic development' and the overt reliance of improvising musicians on simple sequential patterns which, among others, Cooke has shown to have been a misapplied preoccupation in the case of criticism of jazz styles.[38] This has also been pointed out by Lewis who, addressing a question regarding the formation of the quartet, noted that 'there were things wrong in the music around us that we all agreed on, and some of them were long, long solos and that formula on a tune of everybody playing the melody in the first chorus followed by a string of solos, and then the melody again'.[39] We might even look for answers at some sweeping

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[35] Martin Williams, *Jazz Masters in Transition, 1957-1969* (London: The MacMillan Company, 1970), 112.

[36] See Cooke, 'Jazz Among the Classics, and the Case of Duke Ellington', 153-58.

[37] See for instance Schulenberg, 'Composition and Improvisation in the School of J.S. Bach', 1-42.

[38] Cooke, 'Jazz Among the Classics, and the Case of Duke Ellington', 168.

[39] Whitney Balliet, *Ecstasy At the Onion: Thirty One Pieces on Jazz* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), 162. The creation of the quartet was also known to be a reaction against the old melody-solo-melody forms so prevalent in jazz (see concluding paragraphs of section 3.4).

changes in the jazz industry which were forcing musicians to adopt to new performance venues and changing audience demographics.[40] But there are further, perhaps more defensible reasons, for reticence on this issue. Writing back in 1946, Winthrop Sergeant maintained that jazz is folk music, and that 'the distinction between folk music and art music is profound and nearly absolute'. He concluded that '[jazz] has not proved itself an art of sufficient poetic or intellectual scope to take the place in civilised society occupied by the great art of concert and operatic music.'[41] In such statements we may look for answers for some of the work of the MJQ. Efforts to adapt the European models and embrace some of the most sacred bastions of the classical canon sit at the very core of the quartet's willingness to sell its product to the concert hall, as a class attraction. Williams, for instance, wondered whether some jazz musicians were attracted to concert music because of false notions of prestige.[42] Following his formulation, we may understand why, alas, some MJQ performances—and archival audio-visual material reinforces this view—were accompanied by what might well be considered as intellectual posturing.

In comparing my study of the life and music of Milt Jackson in this thesis, and Coady's landmark study of Lewis, we begin to see a clearer picture as to why Jackson's and Lewis's 'improvisations' on threads of black history resulted in rather separate storylines.[43] Lewis and Jackson represented different groups in the African American community. Both their backgrounds constituted rich sites for expressing embodied, collective knowledge that typified African American 'uplifting strategies' with a purpose of survival and success in a white-dominated, racially stratified North America, but from rather different points of view. As I have showed, Jackson was brought up amid the depths of the Great Depression in Detroit, in a city that was deeply affected by the sweeping changes happening in the years leading to the Second World War. As a member of the Church of God in Christ he was active in a vibrant community with a specific cultural heritage that influenced him deeply. Jackson's formation in his school, Miller High, was also significant in his development. The school reflected the combination of dynamic growth and social negotiations that occupied Detroit in the 1930s and, although it was caught up in a reform programme in music that didn't favour

[40] See Coady, 'Branching Out: The Great Ear of Venue Creation', In *John Lewis and the Challenge of "Real" Black Music*, 24-82.

[41] Robert Gottlieb, *Reading Jazz* (New York, Pantheon and London: Bloomsbury, 1996), 772. Quoted in Cooke, 'Jazz among the classics, and the case of Duke Ellington', 157.

[42] Williams, *Jazz Masters in Transition, 1957-1969*, 114.

[43] Coady, *John Lewis and the Challenge of "Real" Black Music*. For a review of Coady's work see Alexander Gagatsis, 'Book Review: John Lewis and the Challenge of "Real" Black Music', *Jazz Research* 17, no. 2 (2018).

African American students and immigrants, it produced an astonishing number of highly regarded jazz musicians. All these experiences accumulated to Jackson being, in many ways, representative of bebop musicians; one who satisfied modernist ideals by situating his music in 'black Atlantic musical traditions', as Ramsey has noted of Bud Powell, in terms equally applicable to Jackson.[44] The vibist was an improvising musician of far more bite and power than Lewis, and this was certainly unusual for a player of his delicately chiming instrument. Jackson's music was known to be overtly rooted in bebop's intricately long-lined melodies, the gospel and the blues, and his persona reflected powerful connections to African American communal values.

Contrary to Jackson, Lewis's middle-upper class background and upbringing in a suburb of Albuquerque, New Mexico, signalled a rather different experience in the African American community. His pursuit of a degree in music theory and anthropology, as well as his overall interest in European cultural products somehow requires from us to situate him in a rather different frame. The pianist was steeped in classical music, and enjoyed threading the characteristic phrasing and swing of jazz through structures like rondos and fugues. Contrary to Jackson's riff-based compositions and titles that referenced the church, Lewis's compositions were more elaborate and shouted out to European names, forms and locales ('Fontessa', 'No Sun in Venice'). Partly because of Lewis's deployment of compositional devices commonly associated with European music, commentators of the time mistakenly understood him as an artist who conformed all too easily to themes of racial subjugation that supported the logic of continued white dominance over black Americans. To give one such example, only a year after Nat Hentoff addressed the MJQ as 'the epitome of Modern Jazz', Lewis was asked to respond to criticism that the group 'wasn't funky enough', that it had 'too limited a range of expression' or that it relied 'too much on fugal structures'.[45] By considering, however, the heterogeneity of the African American experience, examining the differences between 'politics of respectability' by middle-upper class and working class members of the black community, as well as engaging with issues of sonic essentialism in black musical discourse, like Coady, I propose that the reception of the quartet as undermining the African-Americanness of jazz was the result of the fact their work was received rather differently across diverse groups of the African American population.[46] I am

[44] Ramsey, *The Amazing Bud Powell*, 129.

[45] Nat Hentoff, 'Modern Jazz Quartet Sparks Rewardings Town Hall Concert', *Downbeat* 22, no. 26 (1955), 14. Nat Hentoff, 'John Lewis', *Downbeat* 24, no. 4 (1957), 15.

[46] Coady, *John Lewis and the Challenge of "Real" Black Music*.

inclined to think that Jackson's work with the quartet did not undermine the African Americanness of jazz but rather celebrated it in diverse ways.

In thinking through these factors, one of the things we learn from such an inquiry is that essentialising jazz creates artificial limits on cultural identity. In this thesis, I have remained mindful of the myriad cultural forces that occupied Jackson's life and music. In my examination, Jackson has emerged from a world rich in culture, surrounded by a plethora of influences that had a profound impact on his musical outputs. My approach to situate his cultural work in the social world he inhabited was in many ways dictated by the findings of my research. Jackson occupied several systems of articulation which I described as communicating vessels rather than as separable cultural spheres. The Detroit communities such as Miller High, the Church of God in Christ and the city's music scenes, were rich sites of cultural activity. Meaning evolved in such spaces continuously and the music Jackson and his peers produced was the aggregate of these interactions. Jackson's story tells us that he was a member of a dynamic community with which he stood at the front line of musical developments as an innovator of his own on the vibraphone. His distinctive approach to improvisation, the vividness of his musical palette and its indissoluble links with the church and the blues, combined to make his sound instantly recognisable, allowing for successive moments in his music to be savoured as spontaneous and characteristic sonorous gestures, some of which discourage detailed analysis.

A number of different concerns and issues were the focus of the previous chapters. I discussed scholarly motivations towards jazz and approaches to its study and analysis, noticing the absence of participation of the scholars who produced a respectable amount of research in the 1990s. In so doing, I noted the utility of ethnomusicological methods in such investigation and the usefulness of engaged learning. The research community should strive for more of an embodied sense of what the music is made of, and how it is made. This shift has started to be addressed by situated scholars (or practitioners-scholars) and has the potential to place the analytical foundations of jazz studies on sturdier ground. Although these concerns and interests were initially the result of my personal observations as a music student, over the years they grew into scholarly research. During this process, I have found that my questions were not so different from those of several other writers. The ways, however, with which scholars have addressed some of these concerns differ substantially. Monson, for example, recognised the 'idiosyncratic and historically situated character of the data resulting from our research', and noted that 'if musicians are saying something—musically, culturally, socially, or politically—when they improvise', then we ought to

consider what is being articulated and in what ways. Monson, however, employed a much more abstract approach to tackling such issues in which she discusses concepts of irony in the music of celebrated jazz musicians.[47] Despite the observations in this thesis, I am constantly reminded that I am still, thankfully, amazed at the craft of musicians of Jackson's calibre. I am also reminded that despite the sometimes exhaustive, breaking down of all the components that make up a solo, the music is something always beyond explication, and often the sheer motivation for the work we scholars undertake. Which brings me to my concluding comments of my introduction: that one must not forget to *listen*.

My interest in surveying Jackson's life and music has been motivated not only by a gap in scholarly writing about the vibist, but also from my belief that alternative interpretative frameworks may reveal multiple cultural histories and social identities. Now that jazz has been approached by such varied methodologies across the humanities, we might finally start to consider the study of jazz in terms of concrete moves in forms of improvisation. Such investigation, suggested implicitly throughout this thesis, has repercussions for the way we study this music. Jazz is constantly in flux; the music has never been static for too long. It would help historians of jazz to be able to identify more localised changes in musical production rather than classifying the music into the more artificial categories of 'swing', 'bebop' and so forth. In this line of argument, the concept of interaction championed by Monson also takes on a different meaning with a study of more localised changes in musical production.[48] I have demonstrated, for example, that much work remains to be conducted in terms of observing the kind of signs that give meaning to jazz, and the devices that make us speak of a 'jazz language'. This would result in our study also being a process and, like the music, result in, not a fixed and immutable agenda, but in a normative and evaluative framework.

In drawing this thesis to close, I want to return to a more personal perspective, and conclude with a formulation that has its roots in the introduction of my MA dissertation and resonates across this thesis.[49] It has become clearer to me that, on the one hand, the more traditional forms of writing about jazz are useful in communicating ideas and in keeping scholars, as an ethnomusicologist might say, focused on the ways in which jazz continues to

[47] Monson, 'Doubleness and Jazz Improvisation', 284-85.

[48] Monson, *Saying Something*.

[49] Alexander Gagatsis, 'Compositional Strategies in Milt Jackson's Improvisations', (M.Mus. diss., King's College London, September 2013).

be historically constructed, socially maintained, and individually created and experienced.[50] But it can also be dreadfully limited and limiting because it leaves out so much of who we are and what the music might mean for each one of us. Of course, finding new ways to write about music that are both scholarly and personal, both 'science' and 'art,' controversial as it is, is extremely difficult, as I have come to find while writing these pages. It is harder to be honest about one's work and easier to leave all the personal, ambiguous, contextual material out. But as scholars of a music that is very much alive, we also have a tremendous advantage in that we can engage, even if partially, with the cultural product under investigation by performing, listening and reacting to what is being examined. It is a tremendous creative challenge to achieve such a synthesis of analytical tools but also an opportunity to be more fully present in one's work; a challenge that is beginning to be tackled by some scholars as Alfonso Montuori has noted.[51] Perhaps one key challenge is to find, like jazz musicians, a voice, or voices, that incorporate both the rational and emotional, theory and experience; a voice that would allow us, scholars, to situate our research closer to the musicians' craft.

This thesis has certainly also been one such task: one of self-development and of finding one's own identity in dialogue with and through the world one is studying—very much like Jackson and improvising musicians sought to find their own personal voice in shaping their unique sonic identities. In following this path, jazz scholarship can become an inquiry into the relationship between subject and object, self and other, head and heart, an ongoing invitation to, and navigation of, the paradoxical nature of the matters that occupy our work. It is a hopeful but also pitifully haunted thought. Until that moment comes we have a long way to go and, alas, a considerable amount of information, of music, and of who we are, will be left behind. But it is also a creative challenge we must not overlook.

[50] Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away*, 172.

[51] Montuori, 'The Complexity of Improvisation and the Improvisation of Complexity', 253.

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DISCOGRAPHY

The following discography is indicative of the recordings I reference in the main text but does not aim to provide detailed information on dates, time and place. The personnel listed is indicative of the musicians who played on the track which is referenced in the main text and does not correspond to all the musicians who participated in producing this record. Through the years, there have been so many reissues that in many instances it is often impossible to track down information about the original take.

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Brown, Wini. *Miss Brown For You* (Savoy SJL 1163). unknown (trumpet) unknown (alto sax) unknown (tenor sax) Charlie Fowlkes (baritone sax) Milt Jackson (vibes) unknown (piano) unknown (bass) possibly Kenny Clarke (drums) Wini Brown (vocals). NYC, 21 February 1949.

Clark Sisters. *The Dynamic Clark Sisters with Mattie Moss Clark* (New Birth Records – New 7056). Recorded live at Baily Cathedral- Detroit, Michigan.

Coltrane, John. *The John Coltrane Quartet – African/Brass* (Impulse! A-6). Booker Little (trumpet) Britt Woodman (trombone) Donald Corrado, Bob Northern, Robert Swisshelm, Julius Watkins (French horn) Carl Bowman (euphonium) Bill Barber (tuba) Eric Dolphy (alto sax, flute, bass clarinet) John Coltrane (tenor sax) Pat Patrick (baritone sax) McCoy Tyner (piano) Reggie Workman (bass) Art Davis (bass -2) Elvin Jones (drums) John Coltrane, McCoy Tyner (arranger) Eric Dolphy (orchestrator, conductor). Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 7 June 1961.

Davis, Miles. *Bag's Groove* (PRLP 7109). Miles Davis (trumpet) Milt Jackson (vibes) Thelonious Monk (piano) Percy Heath (bass) Kenny Clarke (drums). Rudy Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, NJ, 24 December 1954.

———. *Kind Of Blue* (Columbia CL 1355). Miles Davis (trumpet) Cannonball Adderley (alto sax -1,2) John Coltrane (tenor sax) Wynton Kelly (piano -1) Bill Evans (piano -2,3) Paul Chambers (bass) Jimmy Cobb (drums). Columbia 30th Street Studios, NYC, 2 March 1959

Dorsey, Thomas. *Precious Lord Recordings of the Great Gospel Songs of Thomas A. Dorsey* (Columbia CK 57164), 1994.

Gillespie, Dizzy. *Dizzy Gillespie and His Bebop Six*. Spotlite (E) SPJ 123 Dizzy Gillespie (trumpet) Charlie Parker (alto sax) Milt Jackson (vibes) Al Haig (piano) Ray Brown (bass) Stan Levey (drums) Ernie "Bubbles" Whitman (announcer), AFRS Jubilee, NBC Studios, Hollywood, CA, 29 December 1945.

———. *Dizzy Gillespie: The Complete RCA Victor Recordings* (Bluebird 07863 66528-2, CD). Dizzy Gillespie (trumpet) Don Byas (tenor sax -1/5) Milt Jackson (vibes) Al Haig (piano) Bill DeArango (guitar) Ray Brown (bass) J.C. Heard (drums). NY, 22 February 1946.

———. *Groovin' High* (Savoy MG 12020). Dave Burns, Talib Daawud, Kenny Dorham, Dizzy Gillespie, John Lynch, Elmon Wright (trumpet) Leon Comegys, Alton 'Slim' Moore, Gordon Thomas (trombone) Howard Johnson, Sonny Stitt (alto sax) Ray Abrams, Warren Lucky (tenor sax) Leo Parker (baritone sax) Milt Jackson (vibes)

John Lewis (piano) Ray Brown (bass) Kenny Clarke (drums) Alice Roberts (vocals). NYC, 9 July 1946.

Gillespie, Dizzy, Sonny Berman, Fats Navarro. *Modern Jazz Trumpets*. (Spotlite (E) SPJ 132) Dizzy Gillespie (trumpet, vocals) Lucky Thompson (tenor sax, vocals) Milt Jackson (vibes, vocals) Al Haig (piano) Ray Brown (bass) Stan Levey (drums) Electro Broadcast Studios, Glendale, CA, 7 February 1946.

Goodman, Benny, et al. *The Jazz Makers* (Columbia CL 1036). Dizzy Gillespie (trumpet) Trummy Young (trombone) Don Byas (tenor sax) Clyde Hart (piano) Oscar Pettiford (bass) Irv Kluger (drums). NYC, 9 January 1945.

Hawkins, Coleman. *Bean and The Boys* (Prestige PR 7824, 1972, LP), Fats Navarro (trumpet -1,2) J.J. Johnson (trombone -1,2) Porter Kilbert (alto sax -1,2) Coleman Hawkins (tenor sax) Milt Jackson (vibes) Hank Jones (piano) Curly Russell (bass) Max Roach (drums) NYC, December 1946.

Howard McGhee Sextet with Milt Jackson (Savoy MG 12026, SJL 2219). Howard McGhee (trumpet) Jimmy Heath (alto, baritone sax -1/5,7) Milt Jackson (vibes) Will Davis (piano) Percy Heath (bass) Joe Harris (drums). Chicago, IL, February 1948.

Jackson, Milt. *Wizard of the Vibes* (Blue Note LC 0133, 1952). Lou Donaldson (alto sax -1,4,7/9) Milt Jackson (vibes) John Lewis (piano) Percy Heath (bass) Kenny Clarke (drums), WOR Studios, NYC, April 7, 1952 and Apex Studios, New York City on 2 July 1948

———. *Milt Jackson and Kenny Dorhman, 1949-1956, Roll'Em Bags* (MG 12042). Kenny Dorham (trumpet, piano) Julius Watkins (French horn) Billy Mitchell (tenor sax) Milt Jackson (vibes, piano) Curly Russell (bass) Kenny Clarke (drums) Joe Harris (timbales), NYC, 25 January 1949.

———. *The Quartet* (Savoy MG 12046). Milt Jackson (vibes) John Lewis (piano) Ray Brown (bass) Kenny Clarke (drums). NYC, August 24, 1951. The album is also listed under the Dee Gee record label, owned by Dizzy Gillespie (DG 1002).

———. *Milt Jackson Quartet* (PRLP 7003). Milt Jackson (vibes) Horace Silver (piano) Percy Heath (bass) Connie Kay (drums). Rudy Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, NJ, 20 May 1955. Also released as *Soul Pioneers* (PRLP 7224).

———. *Opus de Jazz* (Savoy 4500, MG 12036, MG 12126). Frank Wess (tenor sax, flute) Milt Jackson (vibes) Hank Jones (piano) Eddie Jones (bass) Kenny Clarke (drums). NYC, 28 October 1955.

———. *Meet Milt Jackson* (Savoy MG 12061, SJL 2204). Lucky Thompson (tenor sax) Milt Jackson (vibes) Hank Jones (piano) Wendell Marshall (bass) Kenny Clarke (drums). NYC, J23 anuary 1956.

———. *Bags and Flutes* (Atlantic LP 1294, SD 1294). Bobby Jaspar (flute) Milt Jackson (vibes) Tommy Flanagan (piano) Kenny Burrell (guitar) Percy Heath (bass) Art Taylor (drums). NYC, 21 May 1957.

———. *The Ballad Artistry of Milt Jackson* (Atlantic LP 1342). Don Hammond (alto flute) Julius Held, Harry Lookofsky, David Nadien, Leonard Posner, Sol Shapiro (violin) Harold Coletta, David Mankowitz (viola) George Ricci (cello) Milt Jackson (vibes) Jimmy Jones (piano, arranger) Chuck Wayne (guitar) Milt Hinton (bass) Connie Kay (drums) Quincy Jones (arranger, conductor). NYC, 1 May 1959. Subsequent sessions on 9 and 10 of September 1959.

———. *Sunflower* (CTI 6024). Freddie Hubbard (trumpet, flugelhorn) Romeo Penque (alto flute, English horn, oboe) Phil Bodner (flute, alto flute, piccolo, English horn) George Marge (clarinet, bass clarinet, alto flute, English horn) Max Ellen, Paul Gershman, Emanuel Green, Charles Libove, Joe Malin, David Nadien, Gene Orloff, Elliot Rosoff, Irving Spice (violin) Charles McCracken, George Ricci, Alan Shulman (cello)

Margaret Ross (harp) Milt Jackson (vibes) Herbie Hancock (piano) Jay Berliner (guitar) Ron Carter (bass) Billy Cobham (drums) Ralph MacDonald (percussion) Don Sebesky (arranger, conductor). Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 12 and 13 December 1972.

———. *Milt Jackson Sings with the Enrico Intra Group*. Giancarlo Berigozzi (flute, alto sax) Milt Jackson (vibes -1,2,4/7, vibes, vocals -3) Enrico Intra (piano) Augusto Righetti (guitar -5) Pallino Salonia (bass) Gil Cuppini (drums) unidentified strings (-5). Milan, Italy, 27 March 1964.

Jackson, Milt and Coleman Hawkins Sextet. *Bean Bags* (Atlantic LP 1316). Coleman Hawkins (tenor sax) Milt Jackson (vibes) Tommy Flanagan (piano) Kenny Burrell (guitar) Eddie Jones (bass) Connie Kay (drums). NYC, 12 September 1958.

Jackson, Milt and Ray Charles. *Soul Brothers* (Atlantic 1279.) Ray Charles (alto sax, piano) Billy Mitchell (tenor sax) Milt Jackson (vibes, piano, guitar) Skeeter Best (guitar -1,2,6,7,9,10) Oscar Pettiford (bass) Connie Kay (drums). NYC, 12 September 1957.

———. *Soul Meetings* (Atlantic LP 1360). Ray Charles (alto sax, piano, electric piano) Milt Jackson (vibes, piano) Kenny Burrell (guitar) Percy Heath (bass) Art Taylor (drums). NYC, 10 April 1958.

Jackson, Milt and Sonny Stitt. *In the Beginning*. (Galaxy GXY-204), Milt Jackson (vibes) John Lewis (piano) Alvin Jackson (bass) Kenny Clarke (drums) Chano Pozo (congas, bongos). United Sound Systems, Detroit, MI, April 1948.

Jackson, Milt and Wess Montgomery. *Bag's Meets Wes!* (Riverside RLP 407). Milt Jackson (vibes) Wynton Kelly (piano) Wes Montgomery (guitar) Sam Jones (bass) Philly Joe Jones (drums). Plaza Sound Studios, NYC, 18 December 1961.

Modern Jazz Quartet/Milt Jackson Quartet (Prestige PRLP 7059). Milt Jackson (vibes) John Lewis (piano) Percy Heath (bass) Kenny Clarke (drums). NYC, 22 December 1952.

Modern Jazz Quartet. *Django* (Prestige PRLP 7057). Milt Jackson (vibes) John Lewis (piano) Percy Heath (bass) Kenny Clarke (drums). NYC, 25 June 1953.

Monk, Thelonious. *Genius Of Modern Music, Vol. 1* (Blue Note BLP 1510). Milt Jackson (vibes) Thelonious Monk (piano) John Simmons (bass) Shadow Wilson (drums) Kenny Pancho Hagood (vocals -1/3). Apex Studios, NYC, 2 July 1948

Navarro, Fats. *The Fabulous Fats Navarro, Vol. 1* (Blue Note BLP 1531). Fats Navarro (trumpet) Howard McGhee (trumpet, piano) Ernie Henry (alto sax) Milt Jackson (vibes, piano) Curly Russell (bass) Kenny Clarke (drums). Apex Studios, NYC, 11 October 1948.

Parker, Charlie. *Charlie Parker All Stars*. Miles Davis (trumpet) Charlie Parker (alto sax) Bud Powell (piano) Tommy Potter (bass) Max Roach (drums), Harry Smith Studios, NYC, 8 May 1947.

———. *Rebeboppers / The Be Bop Boys*. Miles Davis (trumpet -2/13) Charlie Parker (alto sax) Sadik Hakim (piano -11/13) Dizzy Gillespie (piano -1/10,16, trumpet, piano -14,15) Curly Russell (bass) Max Roach (drums). WOR Studios, Broadway, NYC, 26 November 1945.

Washington, Dinah. *Dinah Washington With Lucky Thompson's All Stars* (Delmark DL 451). Karl George (trumpet) Jewel Grant (alto sax) Lucky Thompson (tenor sax) Gene Porter (baritone sax, clarinet) Milt Jackson (vibes) Wilbert Baranco (piano) Charles Mingus (bass) Lee Young (drums) Dinah Washington (vocals). LA, 13 December 1945.