Imperial Jazz

"... It's a Wonderful World ...
[sung in the style of Louis Armstrong]
What was so wonderful about picking cotton?"
*The Fugées,* "Nappy Head" (remix)

According to convention, ragtime paved the way for jazz, inspiring early performers like Jelly Roll Morton, the later stride piano style of New York's James P. Johnson, and the second true American dance craze, the Charleston. Some even argue that the word "jazz" was never used in New Orleans before 1920. People from that city called their distinctive sound simply "ragtime" – which is to say music in "ragged time" (syncopated).1 Whatever its name, ragtime became famous for the startling new way it combined classical harmonies and melodic imagination with a funky mood expressed in cascading melodies played in octaves (or sometimes fifths or tenths), transformed by off-the-beat phrasing in the right hand and by a regular, staggered rhythm in the bass. Ragtime's most famous composer, Scott Joplin, was born in Texarkana, apprenticed in Chicago, and cut his teeth in St. Louis, where ragtime enjoyed its golden age.

One of Joplin's best-known rags is "Solace: (A Mexican Serenade)" from 1909 (see Plate 3). Biographies of Joplin are strangely silent about this curious title, which may reveal more than it intended to. He, or his publicists, probably meant little more than that the song to him (or them) had a vaguely "Spanish" feel, following the convention of dubbing "Spanish" anything from Latin America. In a similar way, "Mexican" was a word used for anything generically Latin, just as it is today in much of the American heartland.2 But what musical features exactly were Joplin or his publishers calling Latin? Does the term fit only this one piece or is there a Latin and Caribbean element to ragtime in general?

After listening to the work of Ignacio Cervantes, the Cuban composer
who died in 1905 and whose career in Cuba preceded Joplin’s by twenty years, it is hard not to say “ragtime in general.” One genre in which Cervantes excelled, the _danza_, resembles ragtime to a fault. Comparing the scores of the _danza_ “La Celosa” (the jealous one) (Plate 4) and Joplin’s “Solace” one can see at a glance that both possess the same rhythmic figure in the bass line that we have already seen in the _habanera_ (see p. 77 above): the dotted eighth, sixteenth, and two eighth notes phrase that was the essential rhythmic feature as well of Louis Moreau Gottschalk’s _contradanza_ “Ojos Criollos,” written in Martinique in 1859 and published in New Orleans the following year.

To the ear of the non-professional musician, the _danza_ (at least as Cervantes popularized it) has exactly the same lift and sway on the upbeat as ragtime does, combining high piano technique with a frolicky, risqué feeling mobilizing classical harmonies on behalf of illicit, lowdown pleasures. There are differences as well. Ragtime has about it the chirpiness of the broad-brimmed straw hat and gazebo-in-the-park overtones of mainstream America at the turn of the century, whereas the _danza_ brings to mind a book-lined study with velvet curtains. Nevertheless, to hear the _danza_ is to suspect immediately that “Solace” is from the same musical family, and the close connection is altogether obvious on the pages of the musical scores.

In the hands of Cervantes, the _danza_ was primarily a short, stylized piano piece based on the _habanera_. Both the one and the other were forms of dance music whose singable element pervaded the whole, constructed with a repeatable bass line (usually of 8-beat phrases in 2/4 time) that “accompanies the melody but that represents a divergent rhythmic design.” How could it be otherwise, one might ask, than that the swaying syncopations and phrasings of Joplin’s bass line (as well as the technical piano vocabulary that here involves repeating the same rhythmic pattern in the right hand on a different beat of the measure) were inspired by the _habanera_, if not directly from Cervantes where many of the same elements are found?

Upon this framework, Joplin certainly added his own brilliant coloration – the rapidly ascending and descending thirds, fifths, or octaves in the melodic line, and the signature coda of his song-phrases typically punctuating a major key with a closing minor chord as a way of announcing the approaching bridge. But how is it possible to think that so widely known a musician and pianist as Gottschalk, who performed at concerts repeatedly and very publicly in Cuba, the French Caribbean, New Orleans, and other American cities in the mid-nineteenth century, would not have put his stamp on North American ragtime? It is almost demanded, in standing to “Mexican” in Joplin’s military bands, were famous for their superb technical facility and the river’s sternwheelers through Mexican territory in neighboring century, the first rumblings of the century, put the United States to John Storm Roberts, these 1884-85 when New Orleans Centennial Exposition which Caribbean to witness inter-cultural the successes of the Exposition the Mexican Cavalry, glowing Magazine.

It is not only that Buddy Louis, trumpetman, soaked up such far-off members of what is widely he assembled) were veterans band’s trombonist, Mike Cornet turn of the century was thought to be the “father of the U.S. Army on the tails of the later talking excitedly about the Havana’s back streets: “More again. By then it had gained new name: _rumba_. He brought a new incorporated a _habanera_ in his

In this chapter, I would like do not know about the proven understanding of neo-African that these forms are, in fact, musics not only a distinct set of unity can be explained by transported from Africa who people region extending (south to n- many cases they were the major – extremely varied at first – harsh conditions of New World conquest, enslavement, and reorganization West African place of
It is almost demanded, in this spirit, to give a more literal understanding to “Mexican” in Joplin’s title. Mexican octets, which were military bands, were famous in the United States in the 1880s for their superb technical facility and they played up and down the Mississippi on the river’s sternwheelers throughout that decade. The conquest of Mexican territory in neighboring Texas and the Southwest, and then later, the first rumblings of the Mexican revolution at the beginning of the century, put the United States in military contact with Mexico. According to John Storm Roberts, these sorts of encounters were already explicit in 1884–85 when New Orleans hosted the World Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition which brought people from throughout the Caribbean to witness inter-cultural fare at various national pavilions. One of the successes of the Exhibition was the band of the Eighth Regiment of the Mexican Cavalry, glowingly reviewed in an 1885 article for Century Magazine.

It is not only that Buddy Bolden, often considered the first true jazz trumpeter, soaked up such fare as a young man in New Orleans but many of the members of what is widely reputed to be the first jazz combo (which he assembled) were veterans of the Spanish-American War. Like the band’s trombonist, Willie Cornish, they had spent months in Cuba at the turn of the century playing in a U.S. military band. W. C. Handy, who is thought to be the “father of the blues” traveled to Cuba in 1910 with the U.S. Army on the tails of the annexation of Cuba by the United States, later talking excitedly about the small bands he had discovered playing in Havana’s back streets: “More than thirty years later I heard that rhythm again. By then it had gained respectability in New York and acquired a name: rumba.” He brought a few Latin rhythms back to Louisiana and incorporated a habanera in his St. Louis Blues, written four years later.¹⁷

In this chapter, I would like to begin by laying out what we know and do not know about the provenance of jazz since it seems to me crucial to an understanding of neo-African musical forms as well as to my argument that these forms are, in fact, a unity: a single New World complex of musics not only a distinct set of nationally defined musical genres. In part, that unity can be explained by the common cultural origins of the people transported from Africa who populated the entire Caribbean basin, a vast region extending (south to north) from Brazil to Tennessee, where in many cases they were the majority. Their beliefs, practices, and languages – extremely varied at first – were condensed and simplified under the harsh conditions of New World slavery. It is the historical experience of conquest, enslavement, and repression, in other words, and not just the original West African place of origin, that accounts for the coherence of...
neo-African modes of expression, and this is the first sense in which I mean the term “imperial jazz.”

As the major musical form to emerge in the United States, jazz is unthinkable, obviously, without the imperial forces that called forth slave labor. The “historical experience,” however, was different in parts of the Caribbean basin, and so the unity I speak of is qualified by varying modes of treatment. These had profound effects on music. For one thing, a different order prevailed in the Caribbean Catholic New World as opposed to the U.S. Protestant New World. The former allowed much greater degrees of African worship among its slaves, and professed a religion whose own pagan survivals made it much more receptive to neo-African syncretisms. These differences led, predictably enough, to different relations to ritual, to the drum, to public gatherings of dance and celebration, and to contact with the deities. The secularity of devotion was in many ways dissimilar in these different parts of the Americas – on the one hand more camouflaged, on the other less. And so, musically speaking, jazz – although it belongs to the New World – is also the specific product of a place with a unique combination of qualities.

Part of the story of jazz, and probably the most pressing one, is the features it has in common with New World African music. But equally important is how it differs from the son. Below, I would like to suggest that: (1) in jazz, the popular became classical only by becoming individual – or better, individualist. To be considered “serious” music, its performers were forced to abandon dance, moving instead to establish technical expertise with instruments (including the instrument of the voice); (2) unlike the son, authenticity in jazz was expressed as a staged primitive; it fell out of contact with the blues, and its lyric content was restricted to the emotional key of a lament over personal misfortune rather than, as in son, a modulated literary performance of social character; (3) the sophisticated lyrical content of son and its rhythmic complexities are inter-connected. Lacking the first, jazz found it difficult to continue developing. In losing its holism, it had lost some of its ritual function.

I will take up these issues as the chapter progresses, but let me be more specific about what I mean by “imperial jazz.” Most commentators, either left or right, concede today that the United States is also an empire, and that it has in fact been building that empire since the turn of the last century when jazz was first recognized as a musical form. “Imperial jazz,” though, does not refer to a kind of music that happens to be heralded in, or taken to be the symbol for, a nation that is imperial. I am not saying, in other words, that since jazz runs the United States runs an empire, that jazz requires the ideological outlook that is. Rather, the music’s demands made on resources that are politically and symbolically crucial (and not only) the possession of one notion, that it is strong or influential. African music had been created jointly in Africa and its territories or (worse) in its absence, but it is still strong among many African-Americans, since there is huge cultural traffic across the globe by the U.S. culture, heightened in the moment when the black American is still a member of the national self.

Let me mention one final point. As it turns out, the phrase carries with it the implication that most North Americans are real jazz fans, except in part as a result of U.S. music policy, which is a by-product of foreign occupation of the Caribbean and military influences of various kinds. Precisely because of its national origins, the music had a start for the purpose of popular culture, and from the brilliance of the music, it was no coincidence that it would be seen in a special manner in which its early champions and boundary line through its various styles.

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My position is not that jazz is necessarily, only that it is a matter of fact that it was the result of non-U.S. contributions from a number of places consolidated (or rather many stories that took on a distinct national form) in the world as big band jazz, for it to mean that the conventional narratives they give evidence of having been the case (or colonial history) when they seem insistent about not doing so. No accounts.
other words, that since jazz is from the United States and the United States runs an empire, that jazz is “imperial.” I am talking rather about the ideological outlook that comes naturally to an imperial power. There are demands made on researchers and the public in advance that this politico and symbolically potent music be considered officially (and only) the possession of one nation. It is as though the United States would seem less strong or influential to many critics if its most representative music had been created jointly with others, when those others live outside its territories or (worse) in its dominions. This view is, not surprisingly, as strong among many African-American scholars as in the white establishment, since there is huge cultural capital at stake. Jazz is broadcast across the globe by the U.S. cultural elite as quintessentially American – a rare moment when the black American is welcomed as a full and unqualified member of the national self.

Let me mention one final way to understand the term “imperial jazz.” As it turns out, the phrase can also be interpreted literally. The music that most North Americans are referring to when they say “jazz” sprang to life in part as a result of U.S. military operations abroad – as an accidental by-product of foreign occupation. It was always heavily marked by military influences of various sorts. Even more dramatically, and precisely because of its national symbolism, the music was deployed from the start for the purpose of pacification abroad. This takes nothing away from the brilliance of the music or the artists who created it. On the other hand, it was no coincidence that it was used this way given the careful manner in which its early chroniclers cut it off from its sources, drawing a boundary line through its very middle.

**America’s art form**

My position is not that jazz was invented outside the United States necessarily, only that it is a neo-African, New World form whose origins were the result of non-U.S. influences as well. Obviously there were contributions from a number of sides, and eventually a style was consolidated (or rather many styles corresponding to jazz’s different phases) that took on a distinct national character. What was disseminated to the world as big band jazz, for instance, was clearly Usonian. This does not mean that the conventional accounts of jazz’s origins are coherent or that they give evidence of having paid attention to Latin and Caribbean music (or colonial history) when making their claims. On the contrary, they seem insistent about not doing so. Let’s look at the actual wording of such accounts.
“It must have been about 1891 when a Negro barber in New Orleans named Buddy Bolden, picked up his cornet and blew the first stammering notes of jazz, thereby unconsciously breaking with several centuries of musical tradition.”

“Jazz arose from its surroundings, then, as any primitive art does—spontaneously.”

“[Jazz arose] in the Southern states of the U.S.A—*and there alone*.”

“It is true that New Orleans was the most important city in the genesis of jazz. It is false that it was the only one... Similar ways of playing evolved in Memphis or St. Louis, Dallas and Kansas City, in many other cities of the South and Mid-west.”

“As any history of the music will tell us, jazz started in New Orleans.”

“Jazz occupies a unique place in American cultural history. Although it has been influenced by many countries, it remains purely an American phenomenon.”

“Jazz was developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by black Americans, who were the first to combine the heritages of African and European music.”

“Jazz happened in America, and it could have happened only there... Jazz is part of the social history of the United States, and must be seen in that context.”

“Jazz did not exist until the twentieth century. It has elements which were not present either in Europe or in Africa before this century. And at any of its stages it represents, unarguably it seems to me, a relationship among rhythm, harmony, and melody that did not exist before.”

“Jazz is not classical music, or folk music, or black music, but, rather, *American* music.”

“[Jelly Roll] Morton was in fact among the first to play jazz, its first theorist and composer and master of form, the first to write it down.”

“It appears that jazz came into being around 1900, by the coalescence of a number of existing popular musical styles, primarily ragtime and the blues.”

I have taken the time to quote so many authors in order to give a sense of how pervasive this view is in U.S. and European writing that jazz is uniquely North American, that it began at the turn of the last century, and that its essential features (combining “the heritages of African and European music”) were completely unheard of before it came on the scene. Some of the quotations are a few years old. In other words, not that all jazz criticism is a mere contribution, and one can find culture,” usually in passing. (or, one suspects, is known) and the son, the career of Gottschalk, is documented and discussed in more problematic, New Orleans.

One of the great exceptions was Stearns, who in 1956 began his entire city that points vividly to some theory of jazz (the theory that have done so “in America”). For New Orleans was a Latin-Caribbean years before being thrust into the Louisiana Purchase (1803). In the century, moreover, it was an underground. After the Louisiana Purchase, the population within a decade, the popular Creole from the West Indies (primarily Martinique, and San Domingo), and Dahomeans, worshippers 3,000 arrived from San Domingo, having fled the Haitian revolution this way throughout the centuries who had already absorbed so much, to arrive and a further blending.

We are already familiar with, from the history of Cuba (a story of Reed’s *Mumbo Jumbo*, which Domingo as the launching point of an argument endorsed by 2 famous novel, *Their Eyes Were* a composer in Haiti). In asserting “ur-jazz” or “pre-jazz”), it might account for a separate Cuba were colonial societies, exactly the same period, by establishment of the black community meant a constant movement.
A Negro barber in New Orleans
happened to have a cornet and blew the first
jazz tune, unconsciously breaking with
the invariable pattern of the Negro.
Then, as any primitive art does —

"The U.S.A. — and there alone."
11
the most important city in the
world is the only one . . . Similar ways of
living, similar traditions, for St.
Louis, Dallas and Kansas City, in the
Mid-west. 12

And tell us, jazz started in New
Orleans?

American cultural history. Although
countries, it remains purely an
American phenomenon.

In the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries by
the third quarter of the nineteenth century it could have happened only
in America, and that America is only a part of the whole history of the United States,
which begins in the sixteenth century. It has elements which are
European, but it is also black, and the black element is the

music, or black music, but, rather,
black music is the music of the Negroes and of the Syrtas, the
Syrtas and the Dahomeans, who were the first to play jazz,
its first form of expression.

Jazz began around 1900, by the coalescence of
the European and the African styles, primarily ragtime and

New Orleans — and there alone."

One of the great exceptions to this rule is the story of jazz in New Orleans, where jazz was born.

We are already familiar with this pattern of exile and musical influence from the history of Cuba (a story that, from another angle, is enshrined in Reed's Mumbo Jumbo, which also focuses on the centrality of San Domingo as the launching point for African culture in the Americas — an argument endorsed by Zora Neale Hurston as well, whose most famous novel, Their Eyes Were Watching God, was at least partly composed in Haiti). In assessing the flows of jazz (or we might say "afro-jazz" or "pre-jazz"), it is necessary to question the divisions that might account for a separate development. Both the United States and Cuba were colonial societies, both were riven by destructive civil wars in exactly the same period, both experienced a rejection by the white establishment of the black character of their societies, and their proximity meant a constant movement of peoples and ideas between them.
The *habanera*'s basic rhythm was described by J. B. Roseñord de Beauvallon in 1844 as "composed of sighs, of lively movements, sad refrains, of chants that are suddenly arrested ... bristling with syncopation and counter-time measures that for performers present an almost inaudible difficulty." A common culture of the Caribbean filtered through Cuban and Haitian expatriates and travelers to New Orleans, and found its way up the Mississippi into the entertainment circuits of rural and small-town America. New Orleans itself was a stomping ground of French opera, Cuban popular melodies, Haitian drumming, American spirituals, and Andalusian ballads, with sizeable representation of the groups associated with these forms resident there.

The French culture exported to Cuba from San Domingo would, therefore, have been part of a milieu that fit this scene nicely and allowed for easy cultural commerce. As Isabelle Leymarie notes, Gottschalk's work in New Orleans "gave rise to the so-called 'tango-bass' or 'Spanish bass' which crept in around the start of the twentieth century." While exploring the frequent travel of free blacks from Cuba to New Orleans during the nineteenth century, for example, Helio Orovio points out that even though Buddy Bolden is considered the legendary cornetist from Storyville, "no less an authority than Sidney Bechet insisted that Cuba's Manuel Pérez, a cigar maker turned jazz cornetist, was the better musician."

It was Pérez, he insists, who established the first real vocabulary for the trumpet — a vocabulary that quickly found its way to New York City. Again, there is an actual documentary trail behind such statements. The confluences do not all arise at the point of origin, either, but express themselves also as the stamp put on jazz in its early decades of development. In New York, "violinist Alberto Iznaga played in big bands and composed pieces that introduced Cuban rhythms — especially *rumba* — to American jazz (we are talking here of the 1930s). A Cuban flutist, Alberto Socarrás, not only played in New York City big bands but also founded his own orchestra." Most attempts to argue for the neglected role of Latin musicians in jazz, even by the devotees of Latin music, begin with Dizzy Gillespie's conversion in the late 1940s through the invention of so-called Cubop (a fusion of bebop and Latin jazz). The actual connections were, in fact, much more persistent and much earlier. Duke Ellington was already using *rumba* in his recordings in the 1930s, the same period that Don Justo Aspiazu took his Cuban orchestra to New York.

The issue of jazz's origins, then, is related to the influence of Cuba (not only Haiti) on the United States. Leonardo Acosta has provided a succinct outline of the case for this influence, and its conduit was not only New Orleans. White and black musicians lived for a time in New York (the
only New Orleans. White and black Cubans lived in what is now Florida throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, and the “Batallions of Pardos and Morenos,” out of which came the first typical orchestras of danzones, took part in the American War of Independence.21 There was a
the direction of Mexico, South America and Europe). "As early as 1850, Cuban music was being published in New York." The abolition of slavery in Cuba in 1866 impelled ex-slaves to move to the countryside and cities of Cuba, but the lack of work obliged them to undertake a new exodus. Their primary destination was New Orleans, which from the beginning of the nineteenth century was the principal enclave for Cubans in the United States.

There was, then, a "direct relation between those new immigrants and those rhythms and Afro-Cuban rhythmic patterns that arise in the formation of jazz." At the end of the Spanish-American War, several African-American soldiers stayed in Cuba. One of them, Santiago Smood, made a name for himself as an interpreter of the banjo and a singer of the blues in Cuba, and he went on to become a tresero and trovador. In the opposite direction, a Cuban musician named Pedro Stacholy moved to New York, founding the first Cuban jazz band. The rise of well-defined styles like habanera, danzon, son, and rumba in places as far apart as Buenos Aires, Paris, Tokyo, and Mexico eventually attracted North American recording companies who saw their sales potential. Along with the success of Lecuona and Simons in the U.S. market, there were performers and arrangers like Vicente Sigler and Nilo Menendez. The critical economic situation in Cuba and, later, the political situation there as well were also factors explaining the new flow of Cuban musicians to New York. Socarras, Iznaga, Mario Bauza; later, Desi Arnaz, Anselmo Sacasas, Miguelito Valdes, Jose Carbeiro, Machito, Chano Pozo and finally, Arsenio Rodriguez were some of the better known musicians playing throughout the five boroughs right through the end of the 1950s.

These chronologies are even more suggestive when one considers the imperial lines of cultural flow that mark musical reception, which is the relatively underplayed part of the matter of influence and one that has not been explored sufficiently in some of the attempts to chronicle the Latin influence on American popular music. No black jazz band was recorded in the United States until 1920 and none extensively until 1923. It would most likely surprise most jazz critics to realize that Latin music was being recorded by U.S. companies as early as 1898, both in New York and in Havana. Companies understood that opening new markets abroad required mastering the indigenous sounds of the cultures they meant to woo. These early recordings of Cuban and Puerto Rican artists, although deployed instrumentally, helped determine later patterns of global reception, even if they did so in contradictory ways.

Traditional histories of jazz had their most luxuriant example, perhaps, in Ken Burns's PBS Series Jazz. In episode one, Village Voice music critic Gary Giddins strikes a theme that you have to begin with is not an African music obviously. It's something that comes right out of all different kinds together in jazz. But in jazz it blossoms into a...

Whose soil can he be referred to that he conceded came together States? It may well be that jazz are common all the same -- that jazz blossomed "into an authentic American..." Fitzgerald alludes to jazz's broad taste, declaring: "We are the new... longer what was fashionable on the Depression era, when we...

called upon to lift the spirit... people... Jazz epitomized the race and swing... We are a young... represents the way we listen... American... Swing's tunes b..."

This chorus, still largely unchallenged (although many are available), has quarters. A national agenda for authors (both black and white) in the World. Apart from Jelly Roll Morton (creole from Haitii) or, later, Dizzy Pozeo), jazz men and women were the musical orbit of the Americas. That all "Americans" and so just as country's cultural and actual b...
Gary Giddins strikes a theme that runs throughout the series and (as we have seen) in American jazz criticism as a whole:

Jazz is the quintessential American music. And the important thing that you have to begin with is that it can only happen in America. It's not an African music obviously; it's not a European music obviously. It's something that comes right out of this soil, out of influences that come from all different kinds of cultures. And all of these come together in jazz. But in jazz unlike in all of the other folk musics of the world it blossoms into an authentic art.  

Whose soil can he be referring to? Are the “different kinds of cultures” that he conceives came together to make jazz all found in the United States? It may well be that jazz is not African (rather neo-African), but why is it “obviously” so? From the perspective we have been developing in this book, it seems particularly absurd to argue — although it is very common all the same — that jazz is the only folk music in the world that blossomed “into an authentic art.” In episode three, on the jazz age (the 1920s), we find an earlier version of this same attitude, a sign of its entrenchment in the national psyche. There no less than F. Scott Fitzgerald alludes to jazz’s breaking of the mold of “proper” musical taste, declaring: “We are the most powerful nation, who can tell us any longer what was fashionable or fun?” Later, the documentary considers the Depression era, when we hear that jazz was:

called upon to lift the spirits and raise the morale of a frightened people . . . Jazz epitomized the American spirit, the spirit of freedom and swing . . . We are a young vibrant nation. The way we dance represents the way we listen to music — this was purely and uniquely American . . . Swing’s tunes became the anthem of war time America.

This chorus, still largely unchallenged by the inclusion of discordant voices (although many are available), has been praised over time from unexpected quarters. A national agenda, fed not only by generals but artists and authors (both black and white), severed jazz from the rest of the New World. Apart from Jelly Roll Morton in the early days of jazz (the son of a creole from Haiti) or, later, Dizzy Gillespie (who collaborated with Chano Pozo), jazz men and women were for the most part unaware of the larger musical orbit of the Americas. They were, perhaps understandably, above all “Americans” and so just as likely as their white counterparts to see the country’s cultural and actual borders in indelible black ink.
In 1941, no less of an iconoclast than Richard Wright, for example, made the music an allegory of liberation from racism: “We live on, and our music makes the feet of the whole world dance, even the feet of the children of the poor white workers who live beyond the line that marks the boundary of our lives. Where we cannot go, our tunes, songs, slang, and jokes go.” In an eloquent outburst, Wright mints a theme that no one since has put better, yet gives energy to the contours of a national creation:

Why is our music so contagious? Why is it that those who deny us are willing to sing our song? Perhaps it is because so many of those who live in cities feel deep down just as we feel. Our big brass horns, our huge noisy drums and whirring violins make a flood of melodies whose poignancy is heightened by our latent fear and uneasiness, by our love of the sensual, and by our feverish hunger for life. On the plantation our songs carried a strain of other-worldly yearning which people called “spiritual”; but now our blues, jazz, swing, and boogie-woogie and our “spirituals” of the city pavements, our longing for freedom and opportunity, an expression of our bewilderment and despair in a world whose meaning eludes us. The ridiculousness and sublimity of love are captured in our blues, those sad-happy songs that laugh and weep all in one breath, those mocking tender utterances of a folk imprisoned in steel and stone. Our thirst for the sensual is poured out in jazz; the tension of our brittle lives is given forth in swing; and our nervousness and exhaustion are pounded out in the swift tempo of boogie-woogie.

Neither James Weldon Johnson nor Ralph Ellison was an exception to this pattern. Those who emphasized the Caribbean connection were minorities within the minority: Claude McKay, a transplanted Jamaican; Langston Hughes, whose personal connection (and frequent travel) to Mexico and Cuba were self-defining; but above all W. E. B. du Bois, whose organizational ties to the Pan-African movement gave him an internationalist outlook that rendered such sentimentality impossible.

African-American culture was and is “contagious” in exactly Wright’s terms, but apart from its genius, it was also exported and promoted by a government only too eager to have the music created by its own oppressed peoples symbolize a virtue taken to be inherent in the national patrimony. Under this rubric, U.S. foreign conquest itself yields mixed emotions when so redemptive an aesthetic form lies within the very soul of the intruder. In fact, black music has played this role in U.S. foreign policy from the inception of the country’s ambitions abroad.

Is it enough, though, to rely on circumstantial evidence? If the one who makes an effort to imagine the nineteenth century, the likely career of Negro and Spanish Caribbean occupi-
Imperial Jazz

Is it enough, though, in establishing the pan-American character of jazz to rely on circumstantial evidence—massive though it might be? Anyone who makes an effort to imagine the culture of New Orleans in the nineteenth century, the likely kinds of interactions among its French and Spanish Caribbean occupants, the well-documented publishing history of musical scores, the state of musical invention among the peoples moving there, and so on, will find it very hard to give any credence at all to the conventional view about jazz’s origins. And yet, the early recordings of Handy’s “Memphis Blues” (1919) for instance, or Fletcher Henderson’s “Sugar Foot Stomp” (1925), do not seem, especially to the amateur, to have much to do with Latin music. What, then, musically speaking, does the one have to do with the other, and how far can we take the argument that jazz is part of a common New World African music?

A number of musicologists have begun to adopt the position of Thomas Fiehler that “the roots of jazz are actually Afro-Latin American.” But perhaps more to the point, many contemporary jazz musicians have begun to express the same point of view based on their experience of actually playing the music. Citing extensive interviews with these musicians, the performer and critic Christopher Washburne has presented a persuasive case that “certain rhythmic cells in the jazz repertoire... are most typically associated with Cuban music styles: the son clave, cimarrón, and tresillo.” He begins his argument by framing the inquiry in the way we have here, by observing that New Orleans “was already a century-old ‘Latin-American’ city” by 1803, that among its immigrants (a crucial fact here) was “the prominent family of Mexican-American music teachers, the Tios, who taught many of the great jazz clarinetists.” As the largest island of the Caribbean, Cuba was responsible for most of the migration to the southern United States and Europe during this period. But even more telling, in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, “about half the residents of New Orleans had spent at least a decade in Cuba, having previously lived or been born in Saint-Domingue, now known as Haiti.” The Cuban habanera and rumba were already very popular rhythms that were tied to the brass band ensembles used in public celebrations—the kinds of bands inseparable from the New Orleans brand of jazz at its inception.

In earlier chapters, I discussed the cimarrón, tresillo, and clave (so I will not reproduce them here), but here it is important to emphasize that “clave” (literally key, clef, or cornerstone) refers as much to a procedure or principle of doing music as it does to a set rhythmic pattern—what Carpentier and others had stressed about the bewildering variations of Caribbean dance names when he observed that the essence of the neo-
African musical revolution was above all “a way of doing things.” The jazz aesthetic is like the Latin to the degree that both are about constant variation and patterns set up to be broken (although I will argue that there are fundamental ways in which they differ as well). Washburne’s important research extends to musical transcriptions of the most common syncopated rhythms found in jazz. In compiling them, what he discovered was that fifteen of the twenty-six most common patterns in jazz correspond to the clave strokes and “could easily have been performed in a Cuban setting.” The significance of the finding is clear:

The frequency of these rhythms in early jazz suggests that the Caribbean influence was so tied to its developmental stages that the rhythms became part of the rhythmic foundation of jazz. Their absence in other African-American styles not as closely associated with New Orleans as jazz—such as work songs, field hollers, spirituals, gospel, and some blues traditions—attests to the unique nature of New Orleans.

The reason Mario Bauzá was assimilated so quickly into the Cab Calloway orchestra, the reason that the Puerto Rican Juan Tizol was taken on so eagerly by Duke Ellington, and Manuel Pérez could play so seamlessly with the Onward Brass Band lay in the pre-existing structural similarities of their musical styles and logic.

There has been a certain politics of emotion that governs the reception of jazz in the United States, and the PBS jazz series exemplified it perfectly. With all the promise of an insurgent knowledge—and there is no doubt that the series’ appeal had to do with its grave and exalted celebrations of the creativity of the underclasses—it is really a parochial “American spirit” kind of discourse that too often emerged from the program. Intellectuals who herald the study of regions rather than narrow nationalist enclaves, who speak of a common “black Atlantic” culture and fertile “contact zones” have not always been capable of giving the right emphasis in jazz to the “Latin tinge” (as Jelly Roll Morton famously described the “Spanish” element in jazz). The deep roots of this thinking, its necessity even, are revealed in some attempts to force jazz history out of a linear narrative of emergence while being, at the same time, hesitant to violate national borders. For example, in America’s Music: The Pilgrims to the Present (1955), Gilbert Chase wrote:

The music that came to be called “jazz” was rooted in the cultural, social, and racial conditions of the South. No single city—not even New
...a way of doing things." The degree that both are about constant motion (although below I will argue that they differ as well). Washburne's transcriptions of the most common comping them, what he discovered most common patterns in jazz could easily have been performed in a finding is clear:

...early jazz suggests that the Caribbean developmental stages that the primitive foundation of jazz... Their styles not as closely associated with-American folk music, the hot rhythm of the camping spirituals and gospel songs, the form and inflection of the blues, the improvised "washboard" bands, the marching brass bands that played for funerals, parades, and picnics, were common to wide sections of the South. The early ragtime musicians who had such a strong influence on the beginnings of jazz came from various parts of the Midwest and the Southwest.  

With limiting inclusiveness, so sweeping and democratic, Chase finds it perfectly natural to exclude all non-U.S. areas from his search despite an opening gambit ("not even New Orleans") that almost begs for an extra-national focus. He later provides one of a sort, but without solving the fundamental problem raised by the Usonian bias of the overall attitude: "Everyone's valorizing jazz," he complains, "as a popular expression that is simply and purely North American. It's worth giving a little attention to jazz in its involvement with the high-art music of our century. A study based on the global influence of jazz has still to be written" (166). Here we have finally broken out of U.S. confines, but only to explore our influence on others, not theirs on us. That jazz be taken more seriously in classical circles relies for him, paradoxically, on its ability to conquer foreign tastes. Because she is not proud and defensive on behalf of "America," French critic Isabelle Leymarie finds it easier to tell a more plausible story:

In places like the old Congo Square [in New Orleans], blacks rattled jawbones and plucked the same rumba boxes as their brothers in Santiago or Matanzas, and names like Augusto Centeno, the three Tios (Lorenzo Sr., his son Lorenzo Jr., and his brother 'Papa' (Luis) Tio, of Cuban origin), Alcide 'Yellow' Nuñez, the cornettists Ray López or Manuel Pérez (born in Havana in 1863)... cropped up in the first jazz bands.  

In an era filled with declarations of migrancy and border-crossing, it is still difficult for many to accept the thesis of multiple causes of creation when it comes to the all-important art form of jazz. In addition to the Spanish-American War, U.S. soldiers and their camp followers had fought long campaigns in Mexico under Pershing and in Haiti for a six-year stretch in the early 1920s at the height of the Jazz Age. Also forgotten is that flood of joy-seekers and night-lifers who rushed to Cuba during Prohibition because drinking there was legal. The national-
cultural categories imposed on jazz make even the attempts at inclusivity sound provincial: "How . . . would modern American music (jazz's direct offsprings such as rhythm and blues as well as other twentieth-century forms) sound had there been no Louis Armstrong, no Duke Ellington, no Bessie Smith, no Charlie Parker, no John Coltrane?" Good point. But how would Armstrong have sounded without Cervantes, Manuel Saurnell, or Gottschalk?

The redemptive ideology of jazz has a distinguished history, and is expressed in its classical form by Ralph Ellison as a strident individualism:

True jazz is an art of individual assertion within and against the group. Each true jazz moment (as distinct from the uninspired commercial performance) springs from a contest in which each artist challenges all the rest; each solo flight, or improvisation, represents (like the successive 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.

This has become very much the standard view. Phil Schapp, for example, whose jazz program on WKCR FM, 89.9 New York is known throughout the tri-state area, frequently emphasizes the "solo." Typical of this genre of criticism was his program on a summer evening in 2004 when he declared that although the brilliance of Louis Armstrong is already known, it is Clarence Williams of the "Blue Five" in the fall of 1923 who "truly launches, for the first time, the trumpet solo proper." What strikes one here is not so much the judgment (since attributions in popular music are always debatable and what "solo proper" means is open to interpretation), but the utter lack of pressure to know or say anything at all about the Afro-Latin presence. No one – not scholars, amateurs, or the general public – finds anything amiss in this confident claim, or expects a more exacting treatment. Leymarie suggests with a good deal of precision why Schapp’s assertion is almost certainly untrue:

At the dawn of the twentieth century, a sizeable number of Hispanic musicians worked in the town's [New Orleans's] clubs and speakeasies. Under their influence Latin syncopations crept into works such as Jesse "Old Man" Picket’s The Dream (1870), Neil Moret’s Cubanola, Robert Hampton’s Agitation Rag, Artie Matthews’s Pastime Rag No. 5 . . . William Christopher Handy, self-proclaimed “inventor of the blues,” had traveled to Cuba in 1910 with the U.S. Army, when tpicas were in full swing . . . Invented in 1840 by the Belgian Adolphe Sax, the sax was rare in popular music before . . .

A musician and chronicler of music, Manhattan (1930) provides an account of black music in the form of “Not Giving voice to the national Southern blacks into Harlem an act of an “invasion” in the eyes of many. Migration resembled the move. But what, for effect, he makes much more literally. These,after migration from the West Indies involved a transfer of as many as 500,000 people. Although he mentions that they “quickly becam[ neb Too (xiv).

It is impossible to read John Coltrane, that the United States is pop-culture, not simply in the unison by Ishmael Reed in Mambro Jazz: Fighting on two fronts – agitational interest” – seemed impassioned. He does lament, though, the "one of the worst effects of the great wave of aliens out of this country back (151). That one of the major authors of popular music who influence on major U.S. form, "foreign within" can be extended, or it can take unexpected forms; rap music as an invasion by for.

Music, 

If for Jacques Attali, music is a form of violence – a view that is appealing, there is a much bluntner arena in which music was another of the ways to express the music of jazz.”
rare in popular music before Handy in 1909, but Mexican bands had been playing it for years in Louisiana.52

A musician and chronicler of music like James Weldon Johnson in Black Manhattan (1930) provides another example of this tradition of engaging black music in the form of “Negro as maker of nation’s songs” (xiii).53 Giving voice to the national unconscious, he portrays the influx of Southern blacks into Harlem after World War I due to a labor shortage as an “invasion” in the eyes of New York’s white residents, saying the migration resembled the movement of populations from a foreign country. But what, for effect, he makes metaphorical he could have described much more literally. These, after all, were the years of the first sizeable migration from the West Indies – both English and Spanish – which involved a transfer of as many as 50,000 persons, an enormous figure for the time. Although he mentions this transfer in passing, he oddly remarks that they “quickly became New Yorkers” without further comment (xiv).

It is impossible to read Johnson’s book today without being reminded that the United States is popularly grounded in African-American culture, not simply in the unrewarded and disparaged sense employed by Ishmael Reed in Mumbo Jumbo, but in an instrumental one as well. Fighting on two fronts – against the white establishment and the “national interest” – seemed impossibly fanciful to Johnson and others in his era. He does lament, though, the frightful standoff produced by jingoism: “one of the worst effects of the war [World War I] was to draw thousands of aliens out of this country back to their native lands to join the colours” (151). That one of the major early twentieth-century scholars (and authors) of popular music would be so unaware of the Caribbean influence on major U.S. forms is surprising. Johnson’s trope of the “foreign within” can be extended, as we have seen, outside U.S. borders; or it can take unexpected forms, as has happened with the treatment of rap music as an invasion by foreigners (see Chapter 1).

Music, violence, discipline

If for Jacques Attali, music is always a re-channeling of ancient rituals of violence – a view that is appealing in part because it cannot be proven – there is a much blunter arena in which his thesis can be tested. From the start, jazz was military. It has been, and still often is, about the army, which is another of the ways to understand what I mean by “imperial jazz.”
I have remarked already that military contact with Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Mexico in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the *sine qua non* of the Caribbean mélange that eventually yielded jazz among other neo-African forms. If these were its conditions of existence, so too were they the cause of its dissemination. Even the PBS jazz documentary points out that one of the earliest great jazz band leaders was James Reese Europe, who enlisted in New York’s Negro regiment, the 15th Infantry, under the command of Colonel William Haywood. Very little of the context of Europe’s career is explored by Burns, naturally, and the significance of jazz arriving on the European continent at the point of a rifle is never noted.

Haywood approached Europe initially to do a public relations job, asking that he organize the “best damn brass band in the U.S. Army.” With the army’s help, he called on all the Negro musicians of America, exclaiming “last call, golden opportunity, if you want to do your duty in the present crisis.” On hearing the band after it landed in France, General John Pershing (the commander of the U.S. troops that invaded Mexico in 1916) who then led the American expeditionary force in France, ordered the band to be transferred to his headquarters so it could entertain the officers from the British and French armies: “They made such an impression on France that there was an immediate demand for Negro jazz musicians in Paris, and France developed a taste for jazz that is still very strong.” Although they recruited fifty musicians, they had trouble filling the clarinet sections. “Then someone suggested Puerto Rico [a recent U.S. acquisition]. Puerto Rican brass bands were famous for their clarinet sections... Europe was ‘ordered’ to Puerto Rico as the Fifteenth Regiment’s ‘recruiting officer.’ Three weeks later he was back with eighteen clarinet players.”

However staged, the PBS treatment of this episode in *Jazz* is instructive, not despite but because of its failure to mention the Latin connection. At one point, the voice-over accompanying the Reese Europe scenes quotes from Noble Sissle, a soldier at the time, and later jazzman in his own right:

> Uttered with a tone of triumph, and ambiguous. From a foreign variant a threat as much as a prophecy. Sissle’s was anything but well-dressed, people being celebrated in the U.S. were the most to many to be in bad taste.

But the paradox of jazz lies in its U.S. influence that depended in character. At the very least, the interwar decades looks modern, the jazz “virus” would no longer novel aesthetic but the circuits systems of cultural propaganda could not refuse. “Jazz,” even appropriated an entire musical complex a point that is never diagnosed in has huge consequences for the future begun to assemble foreign posses consequences of the United States of the twentieth century — puts it

With the soul-rousing clash of cymbals, clarinet and cornet players began to manipulate rhythms that no artist has ever been able to put down on paper. Then, as the drummers struck their stride, their shoulders shaking in time, the audience could stand it no longer. The jazz germ hit them and it seemed to find a vital spot, loosening all muscles and causing what is known in American as an eagle rockin’ it. And I am satisfied that American music will one day be the world’s music.
Contact with Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Negro music of America, early twentieth centuries was the one effect of what eventually yielded jazz among these cultures and its conditions of existence, so too in Europe. Even the PBS jazz documentary series on Negro regiment, the 15th Infantry, and John Haywood. Very little of the story of Burns, naturally, and the European continent at the point of greatest economic development. 

Uttered with a tone of triumph, the phrase “become the world’s music” is ambiguous. From a foreign vantage point, it might reasonably be seen as a threat as much as a prophecy. To imply that this admiring portrait of Sisley’s was anything but well-deserved pride in a popular creation of his people being celebrated in the heart of the urban old world would seem to many to be in bad taste.

But the paradox of jazz lies in its being an imperial brag, an extension of U.S. influence that depended in large part on denying its pan-American character. At the very least, the indisputable record of jazz’s Parisian appeal in the interwar decades looks more dubious against this background, since the jazz “virus” would no longer be the story of the irrepresible rise of a novel aesthetic but the circuits of force – and, to put it more bluntly, the systems of cultural propaganda – that made a military argument the French could not refuse. “Jazz,” even more clearly than elsewhere, appropriated an entire musical complex under the name of a Usonian one. This is a point that is never diagnosed in celebrations of “world music,” although it has huge consequences for the topic, as we have seen. A country that has begun to assemble foreign possessions by way of military occupation – the consequences of the United States’ new imperial ambitions at the beginning of the twentieth century – puts it in a frame of mind that can only be called...
cosmopolitan. It finds compelling cultural differences in precisely those politecs it is busy incorporating into its own polity, and so comes to possess them as well, making them its own.

However, even at the level of musical structure, and in view of the history of its development, jazz had a special relationship to the military – not only for the reasons cited above, or because many of its earlier recruits were soldiers, or because it took wars for a critical mass of musicians from different cultures to meet and mingle (famously, in jazz's case, in the Spanish-American War, in Mexico, and in Haiti). It is rather that the technical expertise needed to perform the demanding instrumental virtuosity could be found above all in military bands. Indeed, the public dissemination of musical styles was vastly enhanced by the one kind of musical performances that everyone could hear for free – parades and military marches: "the New Orleans brass band tradition provides another connection to Caribbean and, in particular, Cuban music styles". In New Orleans these bands were typically employed for parade marches and for performing at other set events like political rallies and funerals. "Their repertoire included marches constructed from popular music of the day, such as the tango 'Panama' (1911) and 'La Trocha' (1897), which included a habanera bass accompaniment."
This pattern of dissemination is very old. Carpentier remarks, for instance, that the first person to understand the rhythmic and melodic value of black Antillean music was not Cuban-born:

One night in 1836, finding himself at the café La Venus, the excellent Catalan musician Casamitiá (author of Cuban songs well loved in Santiago) witnessed the passing by of a noisy carnival procession, led by two mulatto women, María de la Luz and María de la O, who were singing the Cocoyé. On the spot, astounded by the revelation, he wrote down the verses and the rhythms, writing a score for the Regiment of Catalonia band.39

Even more consequential, perhaps, is the effect that the military environments of composition had on the orchestration and structure of jazz. The most common meter in jazz is duple, with a regular stress every two beats and a greater stress on the downbeat (first beat) of each four-beat bar. As Henry Martin explains, “although four-beat measures dominate jazz throughout its history, a two-beat measure is common in early jazz because of its association with nineteenth-century marching band music. In marches, the two-beat measure corresponds to the left-right stepping pattern with the left foot usually on the first beat of each measure.”60

The Noble Sissle anecdote exemplified the uses to which jazz has been put in military operations—a very different kind of issue from the musical brilliance and integrity of the form evident in its complex development. One of the more striking features of U.S. popular culture in recent decades is the frequency with which its music has become a weapon to punish recalcitrant foreign political opponents and to wreak psychological havoc on dissidents living in traditional societies. The discussion below—a very different take on the idea of imperial jazz—may seem to some too easy, too cheap, and in any case unrelated to the issues we have been considering. I do not mean to overstate their importance, but these examples of music used as a weapon are relevant to the argument insofar as music that has come to assume (for well or ill) a distinctly patriotic character—perceived as indistinguishable from the country’s identity, as it were—is routinely deployed by U.S. troops in military settings. In some of these examples, it is not jazz per se that is at issue, but rather cultural products like jazz that have come to be associated with the U.S. national character.

In an article for the London-based Independent newspaper in October 2004, Patrick Cockburn described “U.S. soldiers driving bulldozers . . . [who] uprooted ancient groves of date palms as well as orange and lemon
trees in central Iraq as part of a new policy of collective punishment of farmers.” In a scene reminiscent of the siege of Manuel Noriega’s compound in Panama during the invasion of that country in the early 1990s, the bulldozers did their brutal work “with jazz blaring from loudspeakers” just as the soldiers had earlier sought to drive Noriega mad by bombarding his compound with rock music. As one of the Iraqis observed, “they made a sort of joke against us by playing jazz music while they were cutting down trees.” At Camp Delta in Guantánamo, similarly, interrogators often found it useful to push prisoners over the edge by incessantly playing acid rock and loud commercials. As if replaying a scene from A Clockwork Orange, they would experiment with different kinds of audio tapes to punish and disorient their captives, “a mix of babies crying and the television commercial for Meow Mix in which the jingle consists of the repetition of the word ‘Meow.’” According to Neil A. Lewis, “one regular procedure . . . was forcing uncooperative prisoners . . . to endure strobe lights and screamingly loud rock and rap music played throughout two close loudspeakers, while the air-conditioning was turned up to maximum levels.”

Whitney Joiner writes of the consequences of the disproportionate recruitment of U.S. black and Latino soldiers against a background of unemployment and the defunding of higher education. In “The Army be Thuggin’ It” she reports that the U.S. Army’s African-American events marketing team drives to college and high school campuses, fraternity gatherings, NAACP events, and BET’s Spring Bling in a yellow Hummer in a campaign called “Taking it to the Streets,” a hip-hop flavored recruitment tour that passes out headbands and customized dog tags. The “Takin’ it to the Streets” campaign team “lets possible recruits hang out in the Hummer, where they can try out the multimedia sound system or watch Army recruitment videos.” Cartel Creativo, Inc., a Hispanic-owned private company operating out of San Antonio, Texas, has a $380 million contract with the army to perform exactly the same services in recruiting U.S. Latinos. Their strategy, in their own words, is to give a bilingual spin to the “be all you can be” slogan, and to “capitalize on the American dream, which is still very much alive with the U.S. Hispanic population.”

In a market setting, world music is interesting for being ambiguously placed at a midway point between the familiar and the strange. Its success depends on being both at once. Like the technologies used in communications, plastics, and transportation, musical technologies have often grown out of originally military applications—scientific discoveries made possible only in the heat of war or in anticipation of war. It is in this spirit that the New York Police Acoustical Devices (LRADs) system, used during the 2012 Republican National Convention. Performed by Colonel Robert Boire, founder of the Center for Acoustical Devices and Systems Research, the LRADs utilise a high frequency sound in a way that for most people produces a state of confusion and panic, “it can cause a psychological assault, Emanating from large black cylindrical speaker devices, it has been used by police in crowd control situations to break down an insurrection, and for even lethal force. When used as a weapon, it can produce a stream of caustic sound that can cause permanent hearing damage and induce nausea or possibly fatal injury. (Woody) Norris, the founder of the Centre for Acoustical Devices and Systems, is a self-taught expert on the technology. He told AFP how the pitch was so high that it was not transmitted on the radio, which was the first step in reducing the possibility of listeners overhearing the message. Norris said that the technology was not new, but the method was.

A documentary on VH1 in Iraq, especially the driver, using headsets and earphones along with their gas masks and themselves with the sounds of battle.66 “When we rode across the desert listening to Tupac,” his friend says, “talking about how to keep us motivated,” those of them from the reality of what was happening.

Music, often pumped through individual helmets, has become a war strategy for justifying, heightening and dehumanizing the enemy. In Iraq, listen to rap music. The Army’s own psy-ops is using brainwashing with the US troops . . . . Another faction—cops . . . to heavy metal, which offers something to artillery-like sounds.

Far from isolated incidents, since the “making sense” mounts daily in the news from Afghanistan. As the patented export of the world’s music industry inevitably reflects, “what you hear,” writes Eliot Weinberger, “is what you see.”

Some American soldiers had no qualms about using an equation like “Ramadi Madness,” with sections of “Doomsday,” “Another Day, Another War,” or “War Scene,” a soldier kicks the face of
that the New York Police Department has lately used Long Range Acoustical Devices (LRADs) against demonstrators at the 2004 Republican National Convention. The LRAD, according to Richard Glen Boire, founder of the Center for Cognitive Liberty and Ethics, “produces sound in a way that for most people will be a novel experience.” It creates confusion and panic, “it can’t be identified, it’s an invisible force.” Emanating from large black disks like spotlights, thirty-three inches in diameter, it has been used by the U.S. military in Iraq and at sea as a non-lethal force. When used as a weapon, LRAD blasts “a tightly controlled stream of caustic sound that can be turned up high enough levels to trigger nausea or possibly fainting.” According to its founder, Elwood (Woody) Norris, the focused beam of sound “is totally different from the way an ordinary speaker emits sound . . . It’s like it’s inside your head.”

A documentary on VH1 in August of 2004 revealed that U.S. infantry in Iraq, especially the drivers of tanks, strapped on their army-issue earphones along with their night vision goggles in order to surround themselves with the sounds of heavy metal and rap amid sand and battle. “When we rode across the border,” said one soldier, “we were listening to Tupac.” His friend chimed in, “yea, stuff to keep us in the mood, to keep us motivated.” The music made killing easier, displacing them from the reality of what they were doing.

Music, often pumped through tank and Humvee sound systems into individual helmets, has become a soldier’s chief means of personalizing, justifying, heightening and denying the experience of war . . . Americans in Iraq, listen to rap music, especially when going into battle . . . The Army’s own psy-ops is said to play AC/DC to energize the troops . . . Another faction – comprised mostly of white men – is loyal to heavy metal, which offers some very literal into-the-breach lyrics set to artillery-like sounds.

Far from isolated incidents, similar evidence of an entire epoch of “not making sense” mounts daily in the war reporting from Iraq and Afghanistan. As the patented export of a U.S.-centered globalism, the popular music industry inevitably reflects the dominant attitudes of the nation. “I heard,” writes Eliot Weinberger, that

"...
ground, dying. In another, a soldier moves the arm of a man who has just been shot dead, to make it appear that he is waving.67

The anti-social streak in heavy metal, Goth, and certain versions of post-punk emo fits in too easily with Road Warrior apocalypse for it to be surprising that it has been deployed by army tank crews in the thick of war. On the one hand, a shriek from the lower rungs of society—a protest less against a form of life than hope itself—this “crash-and-bang” music is an absolute rejection of meaning that can clearly serve official, institutional purposes just as readily as anti-institutional ones (a point about bohemianism that we raised earlier in this book).

This reduction of musical ecstasy to a mere use-value in the war industry is not a perversion of the musical repertoire of mass-produced popular music but the logical extension of its market life. The divisions within hip-hop that I explored in Chapter 4, for instance, offered an explanation for the triumph of an L.A.-based aesthetic in the rise of an outlaw form. The business ethos that underlies even an essential formal feature like the “boast”—originally a protest against exclusion from economic life—meant that the rollin’ in the benzo style had a structural advantage in the media wars over rap’s meaning.

How do African-American creative products like rap and jazz become a recruitment tool and battlefield stimulant? This connection may seem glib but in the context of the attractions of an indifferent market it is the expected outgrowth of rap’s ideological armature. In a pattern made familiar by the career of jazz, a musical form that sprang to life in New York with multiple outside influences was refined for export in the U.S. urban song industry, later conquering the global airwaves. Although its influence led, as many have commented, to indigenous and wholly unique forms of innovation in every corner of the world (French rap, Cuban rap...), global rap never stops being perceived in the United States as the following of an American lead.

**Jazz and son**

More than any other neo-African music of the Americas, jazz established the ballroom ensemble and concert hall orchestra for the performance of popular song in a setting where the popular was widely considered “serious,” respectable, and culturally consequential. Its artistic contributions are inestimable, and its social contribution lay, among other things, in a publicity apparatus that provided openings for many New World African forms both within and outside the United States. The music’s plasticity in accommodating the not unique, was especially pronounced as that of the United States.

I argued earlier that U.S. control of the neo-African aesthetic is especially its demand for sociality to fulfill its musical function. With no question that the different United States had a direct bearing, although the United States had one-third of the entire population in 1950. As long ago as the Amistad case black population was born in a country where a majority was first-generation distance from African belief-systems. The States which may have been the second Christianity in the American heart.

In some respects, the color line in the United States in the sense that it often means eliminating the African element in the Catholic countries of the Caribbean was in the Amistad case not just white but for New Orleans towards the Sunbelt be seen “well into the nineteenth Spanish and French Catholic and English sects.”68 Contributing from the comparatively close the size of the in-land territories to the relative isolation of the white as I have been arguing, these ambitions during the precise part of joint destiny of the one and the other unrelated to this dynamic, and blacks as musicians wished to get through the market sieve in a unforgiving populist Christian conditions, jazz (like the other popular origins, severing (or at least in an act of smoothing over the
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outside the United States. The music’s

plasticity in accommodating the tastes of varied constituencies, although
not unique, was especially pronounced in a country as large and diverse
as that of the United States.

I argued earlier that U.S. conditions led to a division within the holism
of the neo-African aesthetic in jazz’s case. Its literary component, and
especially its demand for social satire, called forth forms like rap in order
to fulfill its musical function. Whether one grants my view or not, there is
no question that the different experiences of diasporic Africans in the
United States had a direct bearing on its music. As many have pointed
out, although the United States imported only 5 percent of the slaves, it
had one-third of the entire population of Africans in the New World by
1950. As long ago as the American Revolution, only 20 percent of the
black population was born in Africa (as opposed to Haiti, say, or Brazil,
where a majority was first-generation). Both statistics suggest a relative
distance from African belief-systems and cultural practices in the United
States which may have been exacerbated by the success of evangelical
religion in the American heartland after the “Great Awakening.” 68

In some respects, the color bar was more unforgiving in the United
States in the sense that Protestant customs were more dedicated to
eliminating the African elements of black culture than had been the case
in the Catholic countries of the New World. There is an initial irony, then,
in that the vaunted American form of jazz began in the one region of the
country that was most traditionally Catholic. The laissez-faire attitudes in
New Orleans towards the Sunday slave gatherings at Congo Square could
be seen “well into the nineteenth century . . . and were aligned with
Spanish and French Catholicism [rather] than with the evangelical
English sects.” 69 Contributing to this ideological and religious distance
from the comparatively close contact with Africa in the Caribbean was
the size of the in-land territories to be covered in the United States, and
therefore the relative isolation of the minority population. But above all,
as I have been arguing, there was the fact of the country’s imperial
ambitions during the precise period of the rise of jazz—and, indeed, the
joint destiny of the one and the other. Degrees of commercialism were not
unrelated to this dynamic, and defined the cultural dominant into which
blacks as musicians wished to insert themselves. What was most African
in the music had been purged from it to the degree that it was filtered
through the market sieve in a framework of segregation and an intense,
unforgiving populist Christianity alert to pagan deviations. Under these
conditions, jazz (unlike the offshoots of son) separated itself from its
popular origins, severing (or at least restricting) its contact with the blues
in an act of smoothing over that fit its commercial setting well.
Musically, these combined pressures led to general features in jazz that are evident in samplings of its most common performance styles over the last six decades or so. For the most part, in contrast to its counterparts in Latin America, jazz has been characterized by a tendency toward mellow instrumental blendings rather than a cacophonous assault on propriety—a structural tendency that has been called “the strait-jacket of four-square common time.” Any number of exceptions could be found to this description in the jazz repertoire, of course, but it is nevertheless true that jazz is primarily based on a violation of expectations only within the fundamental regularity imposed by the standard song form. Almost all jazz is composed in four-bar phrases divisible into eight-bar and sixteen-bar sections. The “jazz” typically takes place in strophes in which an individual instrumentalist unpacks, or plays with, the motif drawn from a song with an already existing set of mass-cultural connotations (radio pop, musical theater pieces, and so on—the sort of move evident, for example, in John Coltrane’s “My Favorite Things”). The creative obliteration of European norms is still there, and importantly so, in the African-derived gestures of bent pitches, dirty notes, falsetto, melodic inversions, and so on. But three tendencies prevail: the innovation is individual (each “solo” takes its turn), the entire structure is symmetrical (rather than, as in son, a fundamentally divided structure that breaks into alien musical territory a third of the way into the song), and the Africanized sound is achieved primarily through sonoric effects on melody.

Adorno’s argument that jazz destroys subjectivity, or that its improvisations are a forced return to a never-ending same, are partially true. But they are also overstated. I understand these features, though, to be the result not of a musical strategy or an inherent logic of the devices available to a misbegotten concept (as he does) but the severing of jazz from its sources as well as from its rural soul in the blues—a dimension of the problem that Adorno ignores. As jazz moved from jive joint to the Blue Note, it moved from body to mind. If, in certain of its genres, it prompted dance—in the swing era, for example—it placed little burden on the dancer’s art, and U.S. commercial dance forms inspired by jazz after the 1920s are strikingly less complex than even the simplest of Latin dance forms. Inventive responses to jazz’s mainstreaming did produce its own romp (the theatrical audience-stroking of Cab Calloway at the Cotton Club, for instance) but jazz’s trajectory moved it inexorably in the direction of a listener’s art where it was tailored to the desires of an audience sitting in the smoky haze of a nightclub. It became the art of the intellectual, white and black, contemplating the demimonde. Duke Ellington’s “Black Beauty,” for example, is a masterpiece of reducing unexpected musical turns to a sound.

In the United States at least, there was a difference. In the same country, but musically unmanageable. It stroin in its own nightclubs, played with its own protocols, or as a subgenre of jazz that was seen as “flavor.” One of the consequences of the reduction of the scale of change within which it derived, as though Pops New Orleans sound into some classical music” had rubbed on in the 1940s and 1950s. Duke Ellington certainly felt the pressures of joy-seeking yodelling and “cool” jazz are still a revelatory for the unpredictability of the unexpectedness of their liberated stature. With the likes of Basic, Chick Webb, and others their experiments to playing with the strict performance etiquette in turn—a kind of obligatory interpretation.

To juxtapose Webb’s “Harlem period and place—a say, “Man Mario Bauzá’s—is instructive, a mixture of intonation and rhythm with the listener’s way. By contrast, the rhythmic and orchestral orchestral that accents are bent to a new measure, virtuosity is communal: an ensemble of melodic elements, although some rhythmic, and every one of them is true that the big-band sound without the apprenticeship of its circuits of the late 1930s and 1940s and its many combinations with the context of a much more developed larger audience, and more attractive, or Mexico. As Acosta puts it, another aspect of [Latin] harmony, timbre, harmonic and orchestral dens.
impartial to general features in jazz that common performance styles over the years, in contrast to its counterparts is characterized by a tendency toward mellow, soporific assault on propriety—a kind of “the street-jacket of four-square exceptions could be found to this course, but it is nevertheless true that none of expectations only within the standard song form. Almost all jazz is divided into eight-bar and fifteen-bar phrases in strophes in which an Arabic plays with, the motif drawn from mass-cultural connotations (radio on—the sort of move evident, for example, Things”). The creative obliquity, and importantly so, in the African-influenced melodic inversion, is the innovation is individual (each tune is symmetrical (rather than, as in music that breaks into alien musical song), and the Africanized sound is unpretentious on melody.

enables subjectivity, or that its improvisatory potential, are partially true. Understand these features, though, to be or an inherent logic of the devices (as he does) but the severing of jazz's cultural soul in the blues—a dimension of us. As jazz moved from juke joint to the jazz mind. If, in certain of its genres, it for example—it placed little burden on the dance forms inspired by jazz after but even the simplest of Latin dance mainstreaming did produce its own king of Cab Calloway at the Cotton Club, trajectory moved it inexorably in the it was tailored to the desires of an of a nightclub. It became the art of the contemplation the demimonde. Duke example, is a masterpiece of reducing unexpected musical turns to a highly accessible, even undemanding, sound.

In the United States at least, jazz became in time a manageable difference. In the same country, Latin music was not only linguistically but musically unmanageable. It operated either in a separate, segregated strain in its own nightclubs, playing by the rules of a distinct underground with its own protocols, or as a showcase add-on of the aficionados—a subgenre of jazz that was seen implicitly as a spinoff—jazz with a Latin “flavor.” One of the consequences, I am arguing, of imperial jazz is the reduction of the scale of challenge and impropriety in the forms from which it derived, as though Paul Whiteman’s desire of transforming the New Orleans sound into something as “precise and predictable as classical music” had rubbed off on the great band leaders of the 1940s and 1950s. Duke Ellington certainly managed to avoid diluting jazz under the pressures of joy-seeking youth in search of danger; and all of bebop and “cool” jazz are still a revelation. Nothing like them exists anywhere for the unpredictability of their melodic imagination or the sheer open-endedness of their liberated structure. But it is hard to deny that Count Basie, Chick Webb, and others were forced to round their riffs, confine their experiments to playing with shades of mellowness, and observe a strict performance etiquette in which each instrument politely takes its turn—a kind of obligatory individuality.

To juxtapose Webb’s “Harlem Congo” with a Latin work of the same period and place—say, “Mambo” composed by Webb’s own arranger, Mario Bauzá’s—is instructive. The former is based on micro-differences of intonation and rhythm whose overall scope is to stay out of the listener’s way. By contrast, the latter’s intention is violent syncopation and orchestral outrage that achieves a tonal quality in which the instruments are bent to a new measure. The tone is that of pure shock, and the virtuosity is communal: an ensemble played like a single instrument. The melodic elements, although strongly in play, are subordinated to the rhythmic, and every one of the instruments becomes part of the bateria. It is true that the big-band sound of mambo would have been impossible without the apprenticeship of musicians like Bauzá in the New York jazz circuits of the late 1930s and 1940s where the potential of the ensemble and its many combinations were explored by Latin musicians in the context of a much more developed U.S. performance environment, a larger audience, and more attractive salaries than existed either in Cuba or Mexico. As Acosta puts it, Bauzá “brought jazz conceptions into the aspect of [Latin] harmony, timbre, and orchestration. He sought a greater harmonic and orchestral density than existed in the traditional Cuban
groups," and in doing so, revealed dimensions of the big-band sound unexplored by North American musicians. The familiar account of the era from swing to bebop is that a sort of war took place between the rise of the white jazz man (Paul Whiteman, the Dorsey brothers, Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Woody Herman) and the more brilliant, but under-regarded, black musicians of the same periods. An entirely different contrast was unfolding, though, between North American jazz and Latin musicians.

To take another example of the contrast, nothing as remotely irreverent as Benny Moré's famous mambo "Babarabitàri" exists in North American big band jazz. No entertainment music could claim to be quite this frenzied or as outrageously and impudently African. In this publicly shared delirium, even the European instruments are estranged from themselves and forced, like much African-derived music, into mimicry of the voice (here as heavy breathing). Moré brings the African religious elements of the early cantos polemically into the foreground. When he utters the word "bábaro" during one of the instrumental interludes, he is more or less taunting his audience. He is saying, "this is what you think of us" but also "only a sound so unleashed from your restraints can transport me to this higher place."

Some musicians argue that for all its past achievements, jazz has reached its culmination and has stopped developing. This may or may not be true, but there is no question that one of the reasons for its perceived stagnation has to do with seeing its mission as signifying on American popular song, dismantling it in order to rebuild it in a fractured state, rather than aligning itself with deeper and more resonant sources within the culture. In blues, it was simplicity, minor voice shadings, vocal personality, and repetitive tonal structure based, above all, on sincerity and narrative content that were its replenishing features. Miles Davis, repudiating his association with "cool" jazz in the mid-fifties, understood this point when he "began to evolve in the direction of more loose, emotional, blues-rooted music that paid explicit deference to the black base of jazz."

The market distribution of jazz in the American context interfered with the blues as narrative cry and the creation of a stage-personality based on sincerity — a pressure felt less acutely in the neglected, low-tech creative zones of much of Latin America. What lived on was a rhythmic banality, which left U.S. jazz improvisation looking for its innovations in a very narrow creative space: primarily the voicing given to various instruments. In that sense, Louis Armstrong's scat lacks the surprise that it must have had originally. What it primarily means to listeners today is a "funny" use of voice to simulate the typically African practice of voice. In the one case, people as instrument; in the other, the instrument is against which an instrument is played.

But the fate of Afro-Latin music in the United States, not simply as it lives in its musical underground, Andean and neo-African music that stubbornly is a homage to spirit, using the means at hand for just that reason revolutionized the music dominated politically by an enlarged name of a modern life that mimicked the restless, life-affirming race to nowhere, rich with strange and limited ways of making sense in plain hearing.
dimensions of the big-band sound pianists.73 The familiar account of the war took place between the rise of John Coltrane, the Dorsey brothers, Benny Goodman and the more brilliant, but for the same periods. An entirely different between North American jazz and

In contrast, nothing as remotely irreverent as “Babarabitiri” exists in North American music could claim to be quite rudely African. In this publicly alien instruments are estranged from African-derived music, into mimicry of More brings the African religious into the foreground. When he speaks of the instrumental interludes, he is saying, “this is what you think of as the dismissed from your restraints can

Until its past achievements, jazz has stopped developing.74 This may or may question that one of the reasons for seeing its mission as signifying on in order to rebuild it in a fractured and deeper and more resonant sources of simplicity, minor voice shadings, vocal structure based, above all, on sincerity andplenishing features. Miles Davis, jazz in the mid-fifties, understood he in the direction of more loose, said explicit deference to the black

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Chapter 7 - Imperial Jazz


2. The word “Jazz” is a common feature of U.S. background music. When the Argentinian golfer Angel Cabrera won the U.S. Open in 2007, the PGA tour celebrated the event with a commercial of highlights from his victory against a soundtrack of hot salsa. This faux pas (since salsa is a Caribbean and New York, not Argentinian, form) is analogous to asking for habichuelas rather than frijoles in a Mexican restaurant.

3. The Diccionario de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana defines the habanera as a “genre composed either in two cycles of eight beats each, or in Diccionario, it “probably had, but is also and primarily a “genre” (177–78).


6. John Storm Roberts has been the one “usefully call black.”


11. Rex Harris, Jazz (Melbourne, 1962), 4.


22. Ibid., 42.

23. Martin, Las Habaneras son el (from the first act of Carmen with "La arreglita (the little arra
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as a "genre composed either in a major or a minor key in 2/4 time consisting of two cycles of eight beats each of which is repeated." According to the Dicionario, it "probably had the greatest durability of any musical genre, but is also and primarily a 'form' and a 'way of doing' . . . rather than a set genre" (177-78).

4. Tamara Martín, Las Habaneras son de la Habana (Guatemala: Editorial Cultura, 1999).

5. S. Frederick Starr in his biography of Gottschalk, Bamboula: The Life and Times of Louis Moreau Gottschalk (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), sees the nineteenth-century Cuban composer Manuel Saumell as the initiator of a "lyrical, syncopated music" that stands at the head of the traditions later inherited by Gottschalk, Cervantes, Joplin, and others (184).


22. This chapter was composed before the appearance of Ned Sublette's The World that Made New Orleans: From Spanish Silver to Congo Square (New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 2008) – a history of the city, not only its music, that in regard to jazz takes up in our decade what Marshall Stearns began in the 1950s. See following footnote.


24. Ibid., 42.

25. Martin, Las Habaneras son de la Habana, 12. Again, Bizet's famous habanera from the first act of Carmen was a version of a widely circulating song of the time, "La arreglita" (the little arrangement).
29. Iznaga moved to the United States in 1929 as an accomplished musician who had performed at the Teatro Nacional in Havana the year before. He lived in what is now Harlem, then a Puerto Rican barrio, on 113th Street and Madison, playing in all five boroughs. An arranger who played clarinet and alto saxophone, in 1937 he became a sideman for the bandleader Augusto Coen.
32. Ibid., 164.
33. Ibid., 165.
34. See on this point Michael Ventura, *Shadow Dancing in the U.S.A.* (New York: St. Martin’s; Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1985). Ventura’s excellent chapter, “Hear that Long Snake Moan,” bears witness, nevertheless, to American exceptionalism: “What Buddy Bolden started to play was American music. Within thirty years its impact would make an American tune instantly distinguishable from a European tune, no matter how strait-laced the music” (138). The weakness of this approach is evident when he points out that the “brass band was already an American tradition when Sousa marches swept the country in the 1890s” (136), as though that were an early date or as though the brass influence did not come more forcefully from south of the U.S. “South.”
37. See, for example, an essay on this theme from a much more progressive era than our own: Robert Goffin’s “Hot Jazz” in Nancy Cunard, ed., *Negro: An Anthology* (New York and London: Continuum, 2002 [1934]), 238–39: “It is scarcely necessary to repeat that jazz is Afro-American music, developed in the U.S.A. during the war, and attaining its maximum expression during the period 1920–1930.”
42. Ibid., 63–64.
43. Ibid., 65.
44. This point about “clave,” although found in Washburne as well, is discussed in a number of Latin American musical sources — for example, Rebeca Mauleón’s *Salsa: Guidebook for Piano and Ensemble* (Petaluma, CA: Sher Music Co., 1993).
45. See the transcription reproduced in Washburne, “The Clave of Jazz,” 70–76.
47. See, in this respect, Robert G. O’Meally, ed., *The Jazz Cadence of American
References

1. "New Dancing in the U.S.A." (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985). Ventura's excellent chapter, as witness, nevertheless, to American interest to start to play was American music. He also clearly notes that an American tune instantly discerns the strain among the music" (138).

2. When he points out that the "brass band Sousa marches swept the country in the early date or as though the brass influence had to be the music of the U.S. "South." (Havana: 1898–1997: cien años de música en Musica, 2001), 32–33.


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3. Leymarie, Cuban Fire, 2.

4. Ibid., xi.


9. Ibid., 68. In Ruth Glasser, My Music is My Flag: Puerto Rican Musicians and Their Communities 1917–1940 (Berkeley: University of California, 1995), the author recalls that the slogan "Jazz Won the War!" arose among the music’s most ardent fans at the end of 1918" (52). She is referring not only to the role played by 400,000 African-American soldiers but to those "recruited directly from Puerto Rico, [who] were among the pioneers who introduced jazz to France.


11. Washburne, "The Clave of Jazz," 63. Leonardo Acosta, Elige Tu, que cardo yo (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1993), 7. Acosta observes that to say that "military band" was for many at the turn of the century redundant. Military bands were for turn-of-the-century performers, "one of the few places that a musician could count on a stable salary."


16. Ibid., p. 2. See also "You Have to See This," Harper’s 314: 1882 (March 2007), 22: "the detainee was almost unconscious on the floor with a pile of hair next to him (he had apparently been pulling it out throughout the night). Another time, it was water cloths and loud rap music played the observed sleep-deprivation interviews with strobe lights and loud music."

17. Whitney Joiner, "The Army be Thuggin’ it," Salon.com (17 October 2003). The 2005 Army is 16 percent black, compared with 1 percent of the country, and 13.4 percent Latino, compared with 1 percent of the country's J. The Vital Marketing Group has teamed up with participating magazine The Source, for a sponsored tour.


19. Amanda Onion, "Listen UP! Unusual Forms of Sound to Emanate from RNC," ABCNEWS.com, reprinted in Truthout Issues, 26 August 2004. "Intrepid entrepreneur" Elwood (Woody) Norris, founder and head of American Technology Corp. of San Diego, invented LRAD both as a "crowd control tool" and as a "disrupt audio technology," in which case it is called HyperSonic Sound (HSS).

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70. I take this phrase from John Storm Roberts, who in The Latin Tinge: The Impact of Latin American Music on the United States, writes: “Many Afro-U.S. rhythmic patterns are similar to Afro-Latin rhythms, for the very good reason of a common heritage, even though the Anglo-Saxon element in the black U.S. music mostly forced those rhythms into the four-square context of common time” (42).

71. Martin, Enjoying Jazz, 28—29.

72. But see Frank Kofsky, Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music (New York: Pathfinder, 1970), 109–21. Frank Kofsky has described the attempt to colonize bebop after World War II, and has gone so far as to call it the “secret weapon of the Cold War”; “Even the name of the style itself—cool—reflected the change. It would never have occurred to anyone who knew the music to refer to bebop as ‘cool,'” for bebop was above all a music of engagement, with the feelings of the players, especially its symbolic leader, Charlie Parker, out in the open for all to see. As a style, cool was anything but that; it was the quintessence of individual disengagement.”

73. Acosta, Elige Tu que canto yo, 48. He reports that Chick Webb’s band in the 1930s was “one of the great black jazzbands of the period next to that of Count Basie and Duke Ellington” (46). Bauzá played the trumpet and was music director. Together with Webb, they discovered the young Ella Fitzgerald.

74. Martin, Enjoying Jazz, 17.


76. In “Hear that Long Snake Moan” (op. cit.), Ventura argues that in blues “the beat was so implicit that the African, for the first time, didn’t need a drum. The hold drum, the drum that is always silent, lived in the blues. One man with a guitar could play the blues and his entire tradition would be alive in his playing” (137). I find this observation inaccurate. The weight over generations of Protestant worship, slavery, and then semi-slavery crushed the drum, and drove the music down different paths. At the very least we might say that Afro-Latin music is the blues plus the drum, dragging the European concert into its own quarter rather than, as in the United States, carving out a space of marginal nobility.