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## Vindicating karma: jazz and the Black Arts movement/

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**VINDICATING KARMA: JAZZ AND THE BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT**

A Dissertation Presented

by

W.S. TKWEME

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2007

W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies

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# VINDICATING KARMA: JAZZ AND THE BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT

A Dissertation Presented

by

W.S. TKWEME

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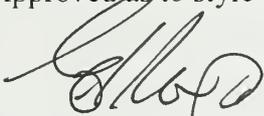
# VINDICATING KARMA: JAZZ AND THE BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT

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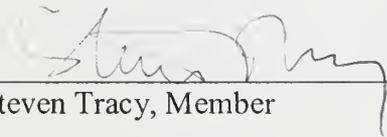
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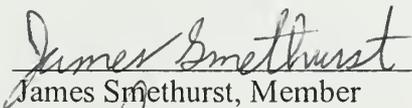
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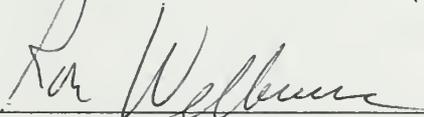
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Friends... one could not get through such a process without them. Among those who helped me a great deal with their support and encouragement are Margo Perkins, a

constant source of kind words and informed advice; my boy Louis Jackson who drove with me up to the wilds of western Massachusetts and sent me continued strength from afar; my girl Lindsey Swindall, with whom I shared many good times in the forlorn Pioneer Valley and beyond, and without whom I may have never finished this dissertation; and as always my ace from way back Salim, who is probably the one above all who got me into this mess in the first place. His sagacity has not prevented our spirited debates from continuing, as does our rare intellectual affinity and simpatico.

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## ABSTRACT

### VINDICATING KARMA: JAZZ AND THE BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT

MAY 2007

W.S. TKWEME. B.A., HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Ernest Allen, Jr.

This dissertation examines certain dimensions of jazz rhetoric, performance, and organizational activity that occurred during the period of the Black Arts movement, the thrust of which corresponded to the larger goals and modes of expression of that phenomenon. The first chapter interrogates definitions of the Black Arts movement, and contextualizes the emergence of black consciousness themes arising in jazz in the 1960s and 1970s by considering the history of racial appeals and identity assertions in the music prior to this period. The second chapter documents the musical activities of the Black Arts era, identifying major tropes and analyzing and historicizing specific modes of carrying this Afrocentric message. The third chapter examines the rise of a generation of African American jazz critics, who sought to define the meaning of the music, and its relationship to black communities and the social and political movements engendering fundamental changes in the perception and practice of race in America. The fourth chapter engages the theme of African American community sponsorship of jazz. The relationship of jazz, and especially experimental jazz, to black communities has been considered largely a nil one. Focusing on the Black Experience in Sound concert series

of The East, this chapter challenges the notion and presents evidence that many African Americans were quite invested in the music and its use as a nation-building tool. The conclusion briefly addresses organizational manifestations of self-determination in jazz, and makes an argument for a more expansive view of the Black Arts movement in assessing its achievements and lasting masterworks.

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the verses of Robert Earl Price's excellent poem "Blackmusicman" offers us these lines:

He is a mind surgeon  
transplanting the seeds  
of Turner, Vesey, Malcolm  
behind black brows<sup>1</sup>

The poem is dedicated to Pharoah Sanders, in many ways a central figure in this study of jazz and the Black Arts movement of the 1960s and 1970s. First published in 1978, "Blackmusicman" ascribes a revolutionary message to the saxophonist's music, one designed for inspiring organized revolt against white supremacy. During the years of his Impulse! contract between 1969 and 1973, Sanders created a series of classic albums and led bands that created what critic A.B. Spellman called "positive black-loving experiences."<sup>2</sup> His extension of tropes associated with John Coltrane -- reverence for Africa and projection of a black higher consciousness -- garnered him much praise and enduring admiration. Sanders' musical persona expressed a progressive Afrocentrism<sup>3</sup>, as seen in his name, garb, affiliations, song titles, and musical practices. His most famous album, *Karma*, remains a high point of African American artistic production

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<sup>1</sup> Price, Robert E. *Blood Lines*. Los Angeles: Togetherness Productions, 1978. Page 50.

<sup>2</sup> Spellman, A.B. "Revolution in Sound." In *Ebony Magazine, The Black Revolution*. Chicago: Johnson Publications, 1970. Page 92.

<sup>3</sup> Here and throughout this text, I use the terms Afrocentrism and Afrocentric not in any specific sectarian sense, but rather as a term that broadly signifies and interest in questions of black identity and culture, the African heritage, and the quest for collective empowerment.

during the Black Arts era. despite critical reassessments that would consign it to the status of time-bound cliché of excess.

The title of this study, *Vindicating Karma*, is a nod to this important recording, which in chapter 2 I attempt to demonstrate is one of the defining works of the Black Arts movement. The phrase also suggests Eastern modes of understanding spiritual power, which is quite relevant since pursuing alternative avenues to spirituality (away from the Judeo-Christian framework dominant in the United States) was a key element of the Black Arts, and certainly for Pharoah specifically. Though clearly Sanders and his fellow travelers had devoted fans, who believed absolutely that his music was a key element in African American cultural regeneration (the subject of chapter 4), the *Karma* LP and such work in general has been often dismissed by a range of influential commentators. Part of this dismissal is the rejection of what one disgruntled writer called “theological jazz,” challenging a if not the core belief of these musicians and their fans that the music had a spiritual purpose and power.<sup>4</sup> Thus, this study, which seeks to document and analyze this music, is to some degree a rebuttal of such dismissals, and a vindication of the Black Arts movement in jazz.

Though not the subject of nearly as many poems as his mentor John Coltrane, Sanders was frequently written about by Black Arts poets, and in ways which mirrored the themes of that most ubiquitous product of the period's music and poetry interface, the “Coltrane poem.” The Coltrane poem has been the object of repeated inquiry, as a

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<sup>4</sup> Litweiler, John. Review of *Karma*. *Down Beat*, Sep. 18, 1969, p. 30; Hunter, Harold. “Muziki,” *Black Books Bulletin* v. 1, n. 4, 1973, p. 19-20. In chapter 1 I discuss in some detail the virtually complete erasure of most of the music of this period in jazz historiography more generally.

means of investigating intricate ideas about elegy as a concept in African American modernism, and as an historical genre in the field of what Sascha Feinstein refers to as jazz poetry.<sup>5</sup> Though his persona as a seeker of ultimate truth – spirituality – figures centrally in most tributes, it is clear that Coltrane was an icon who symbolized for many poets a revolutionary nationalist spiritual warrior. For instance, in Haki Madhubuti's "Don't Cry, Scream," the sound of the horn has the poet pouring disdain over integrated Negroes and punching out clueless white listeners, as Coltrane's art effects a rejuvenation of his black awareness.<sup>6</sup> As another example, Henry Dumas' short story "Will The Circle Be Unbroken" has a Coltrane-like main character, Probe, whose Afro-horn literally kills white listeners.<sup>7</sup> *7) killing of old forms*

A comparison of Sonia Sanchez's poems about the two saxophonists is useful here. As Benston points out, elegy is certainly a part of her Coltrane piece, as his death reminds her of assassinated leaders and the generally deathly results of capitalism. Coltrane's message is to kill white oppressors, even mentioning some by name ("THERE U ROCKEFELLERS. MELLONS/ VANDERBILTS/ FORDS./ yeh./ GITem."). Her poem "on seeing pharoah sanders blowing" partakes of the same rhetoric ("hear the cowbells ring out my hate"). seeing the younger saxophonist promising through his horn to "slit your honky throat" and wreak racial vengeance upon a

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<sup>5</sup> Benston, Kimberly. *Performing Blackness*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. (See chapter 4, Renovating blackness: remembrance and revolution in the Coltrane Poem.) And Feinstein, Sascha. *Jazz Poetry From the 1920s to the Present*. Westport: Praeger, 1997. (See chapter 6, The Coltrane Poem.)

<sup>6</sup> Madhubuti, Haki. "Don't Cry, Scream." In Feinstein, Sascha and Yusef Komunyakaa, eds. *The Second Set: The Jazz Poetry Anthology*, Vol. Two. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996. Pages 120-123.

decadent, doomed United States.<sup>8</sup> Whatever these poems say about the state of insurgent rhetoric among some African Americans at the time, they do show that writers recognized affinities between the two saxophonists as cultural symbols. These poems follow Amiri Baraka's 1964 play *Dutchman* in ascribing a spirit of murderous vengeance to African American music; in the climactic monologue, the Clay character exclaims that the art of Bessie Smith and Charlie Parker would have been rendered entirely unnecessary if they had killed some white folks instead. At first glance, it appears curious that in 1964 Baraka, clearly the most influential figure in the Black Arts phenomenon, chose historical figures rather than contemporaries such as Coltrane, Albert Ayler, or Archie Shepp to carry the musical message of insurgent violence. But the point there was that Smith and Parker had become beloved icons for many putatively hip whites, who had no idea what the music was *really* all about.

Carolyn Rodgers makes the connection between Sanders and Coltrane even more explicit in her "Me, In Kulu Se & Karma," the title referencing Coltrane's *Kulu Se Mama* LP and Sanders' famous *Karma* recording. Rather than violent imagery, this piece accentuates the sensual and the life-affirming qualities engendered by the men's music, seeing them throughout the poem as a duo of psychic and cultural liberation.<sup>9</sup>

There is no doubt that John Coltrane (1926-1967), along with Malcolm X (1925-1965), were the two most important icons of the Black Arts movement. The second and

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<sup>7</sup> Dumas, Henry. "Will The Circle Be Unbroken?" In Dumas, Henry, *Goodbye Sweetwater*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1988. Pages 85-91.

<sup>8</sup> Sanchez, Sonia. "a/coltrane/poem" and "on seeing pharoah sanders blowing." In Feinstein, Sascha and Yusef Komunyakaa. eds. *The Jazz Poetry Anthology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991. Pages 183-186.

most important early publication of Broadside Press was the *For Malcolm* poetry anthology in 1967. In the many poetic tributes to Coltrane, the great majority of which were written after his death, writers saw him as a prophet and a warrior, as a seer and a griot, as spiritual seeker and a cosmic avenger, as an avatar of African consciousness as well as of the essential soul of mankind.<sup>10</sup> These poems are significant achievements in cultural expression of the era. At the same time it is quite remarkable that these poems look back to Coltrane the ascended one while few musicians besides Sanders extolling similar values galvanized writers' pens in similar fashion.

The point is not to dispute that Coltrane should be a source of lasting inspiration; rather it is to note the contemporaneous nature of poetic tributes to Coltrane, many of which attribute to him a revolutionary even militaristic nature/rhetoric quite at odds with any of his documented utterances, with music produced by a generation of jazz musicians that more explicitly made these links between jazz and black liberation. For musicians and poets alike, to be sure, Coltrane was a central icon. The Malcolm-Coltrane twinning is seen most explicitly in Gary Bartz's "The Warrior's Song," where quotes from each man are recited by Bartz over torrid sax soloing.<sup>11</sup> Scholarship has acknowledged the poetry, but has yet to consider the music produced during this period of importance. In fact the music and the poetry are very much related phenomena, part of the same Black Arts impulse among black creative artists. Clifford Jordan's 1975

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<sup>9</sup> Rodgers, Carolyn. "Me, In Kulu Se & Karma". In Henderson, Stephen. *Understanding the New Black Poetry*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1973. Page 345.

<sup>10</sup> For example: Dooley, Ebon. *Revolution: A Poem*. Chicago: Third World Press, 1968. And Harper, Michael. "Dear John, Dear Coltrane." In Feinstein and Komunyakaa, *The Jazz Poetry Anthology*, 77. And Toure, Askia. *Dawnsong!* Chicago: Third World Press, 2000.

version of Bill Lee's "John Coltrane," though containing very few words, makes this clear:

John Coltrane, black spirit  
John Coltrane, first newborn<sup>12</sup>

An elevated consciousness and a rebirth of blackness -- the core idea of the concept of the Black Arts -- animate this powerful tribute by Coltrane's near-contemporary, and a masterful saxophonist in his own right.

Similarly, Price's vision of jazz as a revolutionary force, as articulated in "Blackmusicman," reflects a perspective widespread among many during the period. This has been documented and studied for the most part through lens of how the music impacted the writers and artists, as inspiration and theoretical guide. This reflects the fact that the literary arts have always been favored in studies of culture, both for reasons of physical availability and intellectual accessibility as well as the predilections of academe. Much cultural critique has come out of English departments. In the realm of musical studies, the careers of a few undeniably important musicians of the 1960s and 1970s have been the subjects of inquiry. Coltrane and Miles Davis lead that list in entries, with Ornette Coleman and Charles Mingus not far behind. Sun Ra and Horace Tapscott have recently received serious attention, while Archie Shepp was well documented in interviews and profiles, and some of his own writings, in the 1960s and 1970s. Eric Porter's work on black jazz musicians as intellectuals and activists, *What Is This Thing Called Jazz*, inevitably focuses on much work of this period by figures such as Abbey Lincoln, Collective Black Artists, and Mingus.

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<sup>11</sup> Bartz, Gary. *Harlem Bush Music: Taifa*. Fantasy Records, 1971.

It seems to me that a great deal of important Afrocentric work done by jazz musicians in the Black Arts era, in many cases the best work of much of a generation, has managed to escape serious consideration. As one example, Pharoah Sanders, though held in esteem by poets and musicians, is rarely regarded in either jazz or Black Arts historiography as a major figure. Questing, black-oriented, aesthetically successful works such as "Izipho Zam," "The Creator Has A Master Plan," and "Healing Song" have received little if any scrutiny by cultural critics examining the period. Yet, these recordings seem to stand as high points in cultural expression from an era of important shifts in African American concepts of identity, and as exemplars of the thrust towards an affirming, accessible, revolutionary consciousness. This musical aesthetic of devotion and catharsis connected with longstanding modes of music as collective spiritual journeys seen in the African American tradition and in many West African systems of thought.

This dissertation seeks to discuss the aesthetic and political valence of a body of work that has managed to fall through the cracks of jazz historiography. While the major players in this school of music held highly visible places in the jazz community, there is often a gap between their popular reception and their critical reception. Many historical forces came together to create an important historical jazz scene, one that in fact constituted an essential site of production of articulations of African American identity. This strong concern with identity among the musicians engendered a need to more sensitively and sympathetically discuss the music, which gave rise to a new generation (the first) of African American critics who wrote often against the grain of

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<sup>12</sup> Jordan, Clifford. *Night of the Mark VII*. Muse Record, 1975.

the established jazz opinion makers. This same need to more properly contextualize a music which often foregrounded collective racial/cultural concerns led to African Americans in the Black Arts era creating new institutions such as performance spaces as well as recording companies to allow the space for this music to develop.

The significance of this historiographical intervention goes beyond which figures should or should not be valorized, but also raises issues about aesthetics, and the relationship between aesthetics and political autonomy. The ways in which jazz music operates as a vehicle for social meaning, and to what ends are also inevitably raised in this inquiry. Ultimately, the entire trajectory of mainstream jazz criticism is called into question.

Chapter 1 examines the very concept of the relationship between jazz and the Black Arts movement, first by reviewing the historiography of jazz as well as the Black Arts movement for the coverage of Afrocentric musicians. In regards to the group of musicians this study is concerned with, invisibility is the basic circumstance. I also explore the knotty question of the role of race in jazz discourse historically, paying attention to the ideas that musicians put forward about what they felt they were doing in music and how American racial realities shaped the content and reception of their work. One sees that in a variety of ways, black musicians throughout the generations conceived of jazz itself as an art form created by and expressive of African American culture. Duke Ellington, the deserved subject of numerous studies, while a singular artist and personality, was no iconoclast in terms of his conception of his art as

“unadulterated American Negro music.”<sup>13</sup> This chapter also examines the work of jazz artists in the late 1950s and early 1960s, linking their explorations of the racial subject to two epochal phenomena, African independence movements and the modern civil rights movement of the United States.

Chapter 2 takes up jazz during the era of the Black Arts movement. It augments existing scholarship that has documented some of the collective organizations (Collective Black Artists, Black Artists Group, Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, among others) by focusing on other aspects of a heightened sense of racial solidarity and nationalism. Musical/performance/rhetorical gestures by the musicians were one key indicator. Here a focus on specific important musical statements, and specific artists, serves to document a multitude of events which speak to a larger collective ethos. It goes beyond prevalent frameworks in which the avant garde is seen as the primary representation of black nationalism and protest in jazz to establish that artists considered more of the hard bop tradition (Rahsaan Roland Kirk) and populist orientation (Doug Carn) manifested these principles to a similar if not greater degree. The works of these and other jazz artists were linked by an accentuation of common concerns, including the Vietnam War, salutes to black revolutionary icons, and explorations of black identity and history. Through evocations of the black devotional stance, folks from various wings of jazz articulated concepts of racial identity that stressed historical memory, collective identity and nation-building purpose. The period witnessed an expansion or reinterpretation of the soul concept, which leapt from being

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<sup>13</sup> Davis, Almena. “A Celebrity Interview.” In Tucker, Mark. *The Duke Ellington Reader*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Page 145.

an appellation for certain jazz performers and performance practices in the 1950s to become in the 1960s a term for both gospel-based rhythm and blues as well as the essential quality of being black. This development speaks to the ways that jazz had its influence on larger currents of African American thought even at a time when its black audiences was supposedly dwindling and the music was considered to have less relevance to African Americans than before. (This idea was of course hotly contested by many writers as seen in chapter 3, and flat contradicted by events and efforts in black communities, as seen in chapter 4.)

Chapter 3 looks at an emerging body of jazz criticism by African Americans, and their ascriptions of meaning to the music. I examine their attempts to assert a black perspective on delineating what the music was about. This project involved, for one thing, letting the musicians speak for themselves as much as possible, as well as contesting obdurate accounts of important younger musicians and foregrounding linkages between the new music and growing public battles for black civil and human rights. Their efforts also involved creating print organs for disseminating their views which had proved to be unpalatable to the jazz journalism establishment, and thus actualized the principle of self-determination so important to activists of the era. The efforts of Barbara Gardner, Amiri Baraka, A.B. Spellman and Ron Welburn were a response to new thrusts in the music as well as broader currents in African American thought. It is not mere coincidence that each of the three men were prominent poets and essayists concerned with, among other things, development and definitions of black cultural expression, and the relationship of African American people to the state and the society's dominant institutions. I also examine African American periodicals and their

coverage of jazz in the 1960s and 1970s, and trace the fortunes of three specific attempts at creating independent African American jazz journals.

Chapter 4 takes up the issue of jazz's relationship to and presence in African American communities, and specifically efforts by community members to host the music there. There were/are a number of examples available to illustrate the continuing attempts of persons residing within African American communities to sponsor and sustain the presence of jazz there. Perhaps the Los Angeles scene with Horace Tapscott's Pan-Afrikan Peoples Arkestra is now the best documented case.<sup>14</sup> My chapter focuses on the Black Experience In Sound, the weekly jazz series of The East in Brooklyn New York during the first half of the 1970s. Here we see the confluence of several phenomena: the project of creating culture-sustaining institutions as organs of the struggle for African American liberation, the centrality of jazz to the identity of individuals dedicated to this cause, the belief that this music had a role to play in the creation of new black consciousness and institutions, and the feeling among musicians that such environments represented ideal sites for the performance of their art. Collectively, these chapters establish that though the term was rarely used by musicians, and is rarely applied by scholars, that a multidimensional thrust towards self-definition, self-reliance, and cultural regeneration – a Black Arts movement – took place in jazz, a phenomenon eminently worthy of further study.

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<sup>14</sup> See Tapscott, Horace. *Songs of the Unsung*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2001. And Isoardi, Steven. *The Dark Tree*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006.

It will be useful to explain at the outset what I mean when I use certain terms that recur throughout this work. I use *black nationalism* to refer to the idea that the primary mode of action for betterment of the African American predicament lies in black collective action, designed to build black institutions and organizations. The question of the ultimate form of a liberated African American polity – repatriated to Africa, or a separate state within present United States territorial borders, or as members of a socialist multiracial U.S. state – is distinct and not significant for my purposes here, which never delve seriously into political theory. By *nation-building*, I refer to the idea and practice of creating autonomous institutions and organizations which would serve African American community needs and serve as models, if not foundations, for a liberated state of existence. *Nation* is used to signify the idea that African Americans form a distinct people with a collective past and destiny, who share a common culture and traditions. The lack of consensus regarding the eventual political destiny of this people among activists employing the term does not negate the consensus on the basic concept of black people constituting a nation itself. (Of course, all these ideas were deeply influenced by the rise of new independent African nation-states in the world, as I discuss below.)

I also use the phrase *cultural nationalism* in this study, a term that here refers to the notion that of prime importance in the struggle to advance the cause of black liberation is the need for a cultural regeneration amongst the people, through arts, ritual, education, language, and other expressive behavior. This term does not imply that *cultural nationalists* do not engage in or emphasize political or military activities, only that they place much emphasis on reorientation of a psychological and cultural nature,

and that developing widespread respect or reverence for progressive or revolutionary black cultural traditions was an essential component of the movement. *Afrocentric* is another term used somewhat frequently in this text; here it has no sectarian connotations, rather it refers to a cultural orientation that stresses awareness and/or veneration of the African and African American past, identity, and collective destiny as a central concern.

Whether people who use that disputed term *jazz* mean the same thing by it is perhaps an open question. I use it with no pejorative intentions, despite generally agreeing with musicians such as Yusef Lateef, Archie Shepp, Max Roach, Charles Mingus, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, and Duke Ellington, among others, who have expounded on its inadequacy and even offensiveness. *Jazz* is the term I use here to identify that largely but not exclusively instrumental musical tradition that generally features improvisation of both a collective and individual nature, and that is generally considered to have evolved from dance band traditions among African American musicians. This study is not concerned with establishing any exclusive parameters for what is and is not *jazz*, and takes for granted that the work of Gary Bartz Ntu Troop, for instance, is part of that tradition despite their incorporation of rhythms and musical elements more common to other genres.

It remains to define what I mean by the *Black Arts movement*, another term central to this study that may not mean the same thing to everyone. Though I devote some space to the issue of how others employ the phrase in chapter 1, it is worth noting here that there seem to be two basic ways to conceive of the phenomenon, in an exclusive or inclusive sense. By exclusive I mean one can take the Black Arts

movement to consist of those artists, mostly poets, dramatists, and visual artists, who embraced the term and applied it to themselves and their organizations. These would include, as examples, such well-known entities as the Black Arts Repertory Theater and School (BARTS), Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC), the Black Artists Group, AFRICOBRA, and the National Black Theatre. Although these and other participants did not have unitary views, we can speak of them collectively sharing not just identification with the phrase "Black Arts" but a general orientation towards artistic production that valorized certain principles. Among these were that the purpose of art was to aid in the cultural regeneration and political liberation of African-American people; that artistic production should be independent of white control; and that art should directed towards and speak in the language (oral, musical, literary, visual, cosmological) of African Americans. A number of figures sought to articulate the broad aims of this movement, among them Amiri Baraka, Larry Neal, Carolyn Rodgers, and Haki Madhubuti.

I use the term in an inclusive sense, wherein artists whose work shared similar concerns and sensibilities are included whether or not they had direct links to such organizations or figures. Rather than representing only specific groups or individuals who claim the term, for me the *Black Arts movement* is an ethos extant during the decade or so between the middle 1960s and mid-1970s that sought to stimulate African American awareness of a rich, oppositional cultural heritage, and of the need for independence of thought and organizational/institutional power. It is in this sense that I refer to a Black Arts movement in jazz, for very few of the musicians embraced the term

as something that applied to them, even though they often shared broad aims and performance spaces.

This project discusses the Black Arts movement as a national phenomenon with distinct regional variations and emphases. Certainly it is true that, as James Smethurst notes in his extremely well-researched *The Black Arts Movement*, “there was no real center to the interlocked movements” that comprised the phenomenon.<sup>15</sup> As this movement, never centralized, never ideologically unified or organizationally affiliated, matured, certain principles were common, among them that the art would be directed towards black audiences. These organs, organizations, and individuals were linked by an interest in expressing and promoting a progressive and historically resonant cultural identity as persons/communities of African descent. Part of this quest for identity was creating institutions through which values and orientation could be operationalized maintained and not compromised by outside influence or control.

This general perspective contrasts with the dominant ideological tendencies of the early civil rights movement period. The poetry and opinion essays in magazines and newspapers and public utterances of leaders all testify to the belief in an integrationist ideal, the vision of an uncompromised future being a reformed nonracial United States democracy, wherein society would remain largely as it was, minus the white

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<sup>15</sup> Smethurst, James. *The Black Arts Movement*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2005. Page 15.

supremacist customs, practices, and attitudes. American Negroes would be true citizens of the United States.<sup>16</sup>

The crumbling of formal European colonialism began in the wake of World War II, but really began to accelerate, especially in Africa, as the 1950s progressed. Though the NAACP notoriously retreated from its prior anti-colonial position in the late 1940s, many African Americans remained optimistic about political change. The revolts against the British in Kenya, against the French in Algeria and Vietnam, and against U.S. backed regimes in Cuba, provided hope to many and influenced colonial powers to make the transition to colonial self-rule, and eventual independence. The Afro-Asian Conference that met at Bandung, Indonesia in 1955 was another important signal of the potential power of an alliance of nonwhite nations which did not align with the US or Soviet Union. In Africa as well as Asia and the Caribbean, new “colored” nations emerged, providing fresh symbols of achievement in leadership and struggle for people of color. Perhaps no other leader was as prominent in the eyes of black Americans as Kwame Nkrumah, first prime minister of Ghana. Despite the Cold War propaganda, this decolonization of the soon-to-be-named Third World was the international story of the period, until the U.S. debacle in Vietnam was ratcheted up in 1964. Though, as a number of scholars have pointed out, interest in the cause of African liberation from colonialism was present among African American activists throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, clearly post-Ghana larger numbers of blacks in the United States paid more attention to

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<sup>16</sup> See Johnson, Abby Arthur, and Johnson, Ronald Maberry. *Propaganda & Aesthetics: The Literary Politics of African-American Magazines in the Twentieth Century*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991. Chapter Five.

and expressed some identification with continental independence movements.<sup>17</sup> The presence of the progressive Nigerian student Assagai and Beneatha's search for her African roots in Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 play *Raisin in the Sun* is but one illustration of this trend.

Within the country, the question of Negro citizenship rights was increasingly a media story. Though the 1954 *Brown* decision, the 1956 Montgomery bus boycott and the 1957 Little Rock school crisis were heavily publicized events that highlighted racial oppression in the US, local struggles for quality schools and against police brutality in New York and elsewhere were also generating heightened consciousness of the need to organized opposition to American racialism.<sup>18</sup> In some ways, the dawn of the 1960s may be said to be February 1, 1960, when a new phase in anti-racist activity was launched with the birth of the student sit-in movement, begun in Greensboro, North Carolina. As this new generation of young people took increasingly bold and assertive steps to confront and defeat Jim Crow, the civil rights movement – as a major national media story and item of concern for U.S. citizens in general – was born.

During this period, many groups came together to press for citizenship rights, for the fulfillment of the Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution, as Martin Luther King and other civil rights activists articulated. The rhetoric of King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the early days of the Student

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<sup>17</sup> See, among others, Meriwether, James. *Proudly We Can Be Africans*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002. And Anderson, Carol. *Eyes Off The Prize*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> For example: Ransby, Barbara. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003. Chapter 5.

Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) also called upon Christianity a source of strength and identity for protesters, and as a source of shaming of white supremacists who theoretically were of the same faith. This religion was put forward as a worldview shared with white Americans and representing American core values. With this agenda, leaders were able to forge a coalition of labor unions, progressive church activists, journalists, and (northern) legislators that made the abolition of legal segregation a major public issue of the day. It was framed as a moral question, which King articulated more eloquently than most. As he stated in December 1955, at the beginning of the Montgomery bus boycott,

If we are wrong, the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong.  
If we are wrong, then the Constitution of the United States  
is wrong. If we are wrong, then God Almighty is wrong. If  
we are wrong, then Jesus of Nazareth was merely a Utopian  
dreamer who never came down to earth.<sup>19</sup>

This American citizen rhetoric, which King never abandoned despite his increasing pessimism about American political and economic structures, dominated the discourse of most (but not all) black organizations through the middle 1960s. The slow pace of change and continuing anti-black violence helped to bring about increasing lack of faith in America's commitment to meaningful reform. The violence of the spring 1963 Birmingham campaign and that of Selma two years later may play as neat morality plays today, but in their time this violence and its constantly reproduced images, as well as the experiences of many far from the sight of cameras, provoked resentment and fundamental questioning of the society. When Fannie Lou Hamer uttered her immortal

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<sup>19</sup> Oates, Stephen. *Let The Trumpet Sound: The Life Of Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Harper & Row, 1982. Page 67.

phrase "I question America" in her LBJ-suppressed testimony at the Democratic Party's national convention in August 1964, she voiced a sentiment shared by great numbers of activists and others who could no longer buy the optimistic rhetoric of the early movement.

Certain key events reinforced this for many black people. There had already been the disillusioning murder of Medgar Evers in Mississippi in June 1963, as well as the infamous church bombing in Birmingham three months later, after the conclusion of what had been sold as a successful desegregation campaign in that town. The sellout of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party by the national Democratic Party and its allies at Atlantic City in 1964 was critical in moving SNCC members and many other activists to an anti-liberal position. The rise of Malcolm X as a notorious public figure in New York, and, beginning in the early 1960s, nationally through radio and speaking appearances, was also a major factor in stimulating acute consciousness of the U.S. racial predicament. X's nationalist rhetoric often focused on the contradiction of desiring to integrate with members of a thoroughly corrupt United States society. His emphasis on linking the African American struggle to the global revolt of people of color against European colonialism and domination was influential among younger activists, as was his assertion that the predicament of Black people in the United States was one of colonialism. His insistence on organized self-defense, his rejection of nonviolence and reformism, and his call for separate, independent organizational structures to wage political, economic and cultural struggles would likewise become articles of faith for many African Americans, particularly after his death. This man's growing appeal owed not just his forceful personality and oratory, but to increasing

awareness of the very real limits of American democracy for poor African Americans. The murder of Malcolm X, even though committed by Nation of Islam adherents, caused further alienation from the American mainstream.

Although X's assassination in February 1965 did cause some to reconsider his controversial message, the progress of the civil rights struggle, or perhaps the perceived lack thereof, had more of an impact in shifting the ideology of numbers of black activists from reformism towards fundamental questioning of the structures of the state and society. By the time of Martin Luther King's assassination three years later, many African Americans had reached a point where the U.S. state, and white Americans more generally, were no longer seen as sources of authority or desire. New nation-states and the example of armed revolutions in Africa became strong cultural and ideological influences. The strain of black thought that envisioned African American self-reliance and institution-building held ascendancy for large numbers of black people. Thus, civil rights organizations became all-black, churches stayed black and non-progressive, radical black groups called for independence and repatriation, writers started presses and organizations. These "Black Power" initiatives reflected not only new conceptions of the struggle but also new conceptions of African American identity.

One of the aspects of the shifting conceptions of black identity that occur during the 1960s is the pursuit of alternative modes of spirituality. Certainly the unrelenting attack on the practices of Christianity by Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam stimulate deeper thinking about the utility and "truth" of that religion. The NOI's rhetoric of "Islam" as the black man's true religion caused many to investigate their claims, and while this organization's membership at his height numbered only in the tens of

thousands, its existence encouraged others to pursue alternatives to the church. NOI offshoots like the Five Percent Nation, later to prove quite influential in some “message rap” of the late 1980s, as well as orthodox Islamic groups, also gained adherents in Malcolm’s wake.

Malcolm’s call to pursue new self-conceptions independent of European/white dictates also impacted ideas about spirituality. The idea of a return to authentically black modes of being and thinking played a big role in sparking interest in non-western religious systems and ideas. The taking of new names of African and Islamic origin was some of the most visible signs of this “return to the source,” as were the adoption of clothing styles associated with these cultures. As the African revolution shaped new positive perceptions of Africa and their relationship to it amongst African Americans, it also stimulated investigation of indigenous African cultures, and hence religions. As individuals became interested in learning “African dance” and “African drumming,” they found themselves being introduced to aspects of religious thought from the motherland. Babatunde Olatunji, briefly discussed in chapter 1, may not have stressed “tribal” specific cosmology and ritual in his performances and workshops, but as more people undertook learning and teaching in this field, they confronted the indivisible nature of the music, cultural rituals, and religious systems in West African societies.

Much of this exposure to African culture took place in New York City. Historically home to a truly diasporic black population, whose roots lay in the United States and the Caribbean, as well as Africa, the town was also the site of the United Nations, and thus in the 1950s and 1960s saw increasing traffic from the continent. This helped create interpersonal contact between continental and (certain) stateside blacks,

another factor in spreading exposure to and interest in Africa. The World's Fair of 1964 and 1965 also saw the mounting of various African cultural programs. In addition, the role of Cubans in New York in introducing African Americans to the orishas through stuffy of the drums was considerable. According to one account, this was the route of transmission for Baba Oserjeman, who established the Yoruba Temple in the 1950s.<sup>20</sup> While certainly a cult of personality to say the least, the group sponsored cultural events and offered classes through which individuals were exposed to aspects of traditional African religion. Some of these individuals included participants in Baraka's BARTS project in Harlem.<sup>21</sup> Nana Dimizulu, though from Detroit, Michigan, started an influential Akan shrine and cultural movement in Queens, and his drumming and dance troupe appeared frequently in Harlem and Brooklyn.<sup>22</sup>

It is in this context that the appeal of John Coltrane's emphasis on the spiritual qualities of the music can be better understood. His own interest in the music and religious ideas from India and Africa were interrelated, and further stimulated pursuit of spiritual and musical knowledge from "the East," especially amongst some younger musicians.

Thus, the moves toward more black nationalistic modes in jazz charted in this study are manifestations of changes in the outlook of large numbers of African Americans. *Vindicating Karma* describes significant shifts in cultural stances of musicians, which are by definition reflective of psychological and political changes

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<sup>20</sup> Smith, Klytus, and Sinclair, Abiola. *The Harlem Cultural/Political Movements 1960-1970*. New York: Gumbs & Thomas Publishers 1995. Page 109.

<sup>21</sup> Baraka, Amiri. *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1997. Page 312.

within black communities as a whole. Decolonization abroad and the growing civil rights movement domestically helped to shape the outlook of artists (and others) regarding cultural self-assertion and endorsement of causes. This period is regarded as a high point in jazz, perhaps its last, due to the unquestioned achievement of leading lights of the period, including Miles Davis, Art Blakey, John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, and certain others. It is also a transitional era in the political economy of jazz, as the 1960s saw the disappearance of many mainstay jazz clubs and the swallowing up of independent labels by larger corporate entities.

The impulse towards self-determination, arising out of the confluence of these larger political struggles as well as increased marginalization for the professional jazz musician, was made manifest through the words and deeds of many performers. This study focuses primarily on musical production and its reception, but it is important to understand the multivalent organizational dimensions of African American jazz musicians in the period. These took the form of self-help collectives, educational ventures and centers, pressure groups for greater access to performing opportunities, and independent ownership of recording labels and performance venues. African American musicians had been joining in collective survival enterprises since the days of James Reese Europe's Clef Club, and the segregated musicians' union locals which negotiated limited employment opportunities into the 1960s. Gigi Gryce established his own publishing company in the 1950s, and Dizzy Gillespie, Max Roach, and Charles Mingus all were involved in independent record labels in that decade. In particular, Max Roach was an elder who encouraged younger musicians like Stanley Cowell, and many others,

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<sup>22</sup> Smith and Sinclair, 112.

to own their own product as much as possible.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the formations that developed in the Black Arts era had precedents in earlier jazz history.

The major collectives were the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians in Chicago (AACM), the Black Artists Group in St. Louis (BAG), the Collective Black Artists in New York (CBA), and the Union of God's Musicians Ascension in Los Angeles (UGMA). Chief goals for these groups were creating performance opportunities for marginalized musicians, training opportunities for folks to share expand and improve their craft, and to provide learning opportunities for community children. Sun Ra's Arkestra also functioned as a collective, albeit one with an autocratic and idiosyncratic leader.

The artist collectives, especially the AACM, and UGMA, saw providing musical education for community folks as an important objective. But some other formations saw this as the first priority. Jackie McLean's Artist Collective in Hartford, Connecticut is perhaps the prime example of jazz people seeking to keep the tradition of the arts, and jazz in particular, alive among younger generations. The Harlem Music Center though of shorter duration had a similar purpose. The Jazz & People's Movement, active from 1970 to 1971, was the most visible formation which sought the collective power to musicians to force major institutions to provide greater access to black jazz musicians.

The self-determination ethos was also seen clearly in attempts by musicians to own the means of production by establishing record companies and performance spaces. The most prolific of the musician-owned record labels of the Black Arts era was Strata East, started by Stanley Cowell and Charles Tolliver in New York in 1970. Julius

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<sup>23</sup> Cowell, Stanley. Telephone interview, 20 March, 2003.

Hemphill in St. Louis had Mbari Records, Don Pullen and Milford Graves started SRP (Self-Reliance Productions). Rashied Ali's Survival Records was the lone source of his recordings in the 1970s. The best documented musician owned venues occurred in New York, where the loft scene provided opportunities for new living spaces with areas large enough to hold performances. Thus Joe Lee Wilson bought the Ladies Fort in 1971. Sam Rivers and James DuBose did the same with Studio Rivbea and Studio We in the early 1970s. Generally, these venues provided opportunities to avant garde performers, and generally offered low pay, sometimes for the door, a factor which limited some musicians' willingness to perform. As we see in chapter 4, many persons who believed in jazz and its elevating properties opened venues bearing Afrocentric names and such during this period, and the musician-owned clubs were one aspect of this quest for greater control of African American cultural expression.

Though there is much more work to be done in recovering and exploring the range of these organizational activities, as I stated earlier, some of this documentation is being done.<sup>24</sup> This work helps to provide a fuller picture of the relationship between jazz and the Black Arts movement. This study seeks to document and contextualize a body of jazz music along with ancillary criticism and venue operation that are also important aspects of the legacy of the Black Arts movement. The first task is to more fully explore the concept of this Black Arts movement itself and how it relates to jazz history, the subject of chapter 1.

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<sup>24</sup> There is much solid information on the AACM, for instance, in Radano, Ronald. *New Musical Figurations: Anthony Braxton's Cultural Critique*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993. George Lewis' forthcoming history of the AACM has been a widely anticipated volume for some time as well.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE BLACK ARTS AND JAZZ HISTORY

Since I am calling attention to a little-discussed aspect of the music and the Black Arts movement, it is important to consider some of the ways in which the discourse of race and music has been articulated. The first task is to take up the question of how this Black Arts phenomenon has been defined and delineated, and then to identify the ways in which music, particularly jazz, has been discussed. Next, I will consider the ways in which jazz during the 1960s and 1970s has been treated in jazz historiography. The last task of this chapter is to examine some of the ways in which the relationship between jazz and race have been articulated by musicians, paying particular concern to the artists of the early civil rights movement period.

Any attempt to define a Black Arts movement in jazz, or in soul for that matter, is complicated by the problem of defining the Black Arts movement. Much like the contemporaneous term Black Power, the Black Arts as a discrete category of activity, organizations and individuals is subject to no one interpretation, no definitive listing. In many cases BAM (Black Arts Movement) is a term which is applied to artists by observers more so than one of self-identification. As will be demonstrated, this is especially true of professional musicians. There is also the question of what time period is encompassed by this term Black Arts movement. "Given the amorphous nature of complex cultural phenomena," critic David L. Smith notes, even specifying the dates of

BAM “may appear arbitrary.” With that caveat, Smith identifies 1965 and 1976 as convenient bracketing dates.<sup>25</sup>

### BLACK ARTS HISTORIOGRAPHY

In order to establish a consensus definition of the Black Arts movement, one must face the fact that serious assessments of the phenomenon are still in short supply. One of the most useful, written by Smith, comes from *The Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History* (1996). He notes that the movement encompassed “literature, music, visual arts, and theater.” Moreover, it “emphasized racial pride, an appreciation of African heritage, and a commitment to produce works that reflected the culture and experiences of black people... and its dominant spirit was politically militant and often racially separatist,” and was “fundamentally concerned with the construction of a ‘black’ identity as opposed to a ‘Negro’ identity.”<sup>26</sup> Smith’s discussion of the musical component focuses on Chicago’s Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians and the best known musical unit from that aggregation, the Art Ensemble of Chicago. Implicit in this brief discussion is the association of Black Arts with experimental and avant garde jazz of the time period.

For Amiri Baraka, popularizer of the phrase "Black Arts movement" and in many ways the central figure of the phenomenon, defining it is inseparable from telling the personal history of his organizing and writing. In his reading, Black Arts comes into being when young militant black writers move from Greenwich Village to Harlem in

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<sup>25</sup> Smith, David L. “Black Arts Movement.” In Salzman, Smith and West, eds. *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History*. Vol. 1. New York: Macmillan Library Reference, 1996. Pages 325-32.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 325.

1965 to create a “secret Black organization of artists and intellectuals” that would radicalize the African American population.<sup>27</sup> The Black Arts Repertory and School (BARTS) announced itself in March with a parade and sets up on West 130<sup>th</sup> Street a site for plays, classes on history and music and culture, poetry, new music concerts, and lots of meetings. Even though it only lasted for a year, it sparked similar movements across the country, such as Black Arts West, Black Arts Midwest, and BLKARTSOUTH. The numerous black theater companies which arise in the second half of the 1960s are also seen as part of this development.

In keeping with his Black Art manifesto “State/meant” published in 1965, Baraka maintained that what defined the expressions of the Black Arts movement were certain values: that it be identifiably black, that it be mass art, and that it be revolutionary. Baraka’s discussion of the Black Arts phenomenon includes music as a critical component.<sup>28</sup> Players in the New York new music scene of the early to mid-1960s period remain most prominent in his accounts: John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor, Archie Shepp, and Sun Ra. Music would continue to be part of Baraka’s organizational activities throughout the ‘60s and beyond, and Pharoah Sanders among others would perform, however there does tend to be a conflation of jazz and Black Arts with the above-mentioned “new music” figures in his accounts.

Baraka’s linking of the black arts jazz to the avant garde scene has been paradigmatic. Lorenzo Thomas’ account “Classical Jazz and the Black Arts Movement” spends much of its time interpreting the legacy of the Harlem Renaissance theory of

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<sup>27</sup> Baraka, Amiri. “The Black Arts Movement.” Self-published pamphlet, 1994. Page 4.

jazz, but does contain a conception of the relationship of jazz to the Black Arts. Only four musicians are mentioned: John Coltrane, Sun Ra, Eric Dolphy, and Charles Mingus. Baraka is the only writer discussed. But Thomas speaks clearly of the “‘free’ style of collective improvisation that was the hallmark of the black arts movement avant-garde.”<sup>29</sup>

Larry Neal, another key figure in any assessment of the Black Arts, likewise foregrounds music and identifies the same group of musicians and time frame as the movement’s musical aspect. In the autobiographical “The Social Background of the Black Arts Movement,” he even located 27 Cooper Square, where Baraka, Shepp, and Marzette Watts once had apartments, as the site of the emergence of Black Arts jazz. Albert Ayler and John Coltrane are the other figures who receive attention in this narrative.<sup>30</sup>

In “Black Arts Movement Spanning the Period from the mid 1960s to the mid 1970s,” Kalamu ya Salaam notes that the “Black Arts center concept was irrepressible mainly because the Black Arts movement was so closely aligned with the then-burgeoning Black Power movement.”<sup>31</sup> For him, the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), the Nation of Islam (NOI), and the US organization “provided both style and

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<sup>28</sup> Jones, LeRoi. *Home: Social Essays*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1966. Pages 251-2.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas, Lorenzo. “‘Classical Jazz’ and the Black Arts Movement.” *African American Review*. Vol. 29, No. 2 (Summer 1995): 237-40.

<sup>30</sup> Neal, Larry. “The Social Background of the Black Arts Movement.” *The Black Scholar*. Vol. 18, No. 1 (January/February 1987): 11-22.

<sup>31</sup> Ya Salaam, Kalamu. “Black Arts Movement Spanning the Period from the mid 1960s to the mid 1970s.” Unpublished Article. Page 3.

ideological direction for Black Arts artists."<sup>32</sup> His account credits BARTS as the catalytic event even though there were important forerunners (Umbra, Harlem Writers Guild), and emphasizes the national character of the phenomenon, defined more by the citing of names and organizations of different regions and modes. This article, which appears to be a section of the still-forthcoming monograph *The Magic of Jujū*, makes no mention of music, but a later chapter in *Jujū* does briefly note that there were numerous examples of jazz musicians producing "music which explicitly commented on current political events and consciously infused non-Western and Africa[n] elements into the new jazz."<sup>33</sup> This chapter also notes the appeal of Coltrane as a subject for writers, and notes a more general influence of music on the other arts of the period.

James Smethurst's 2005 monograph, *The Black Arts Movement*, also primarily considers figures that self-identified with the term, pointing out, however, that it is a rather elastic phrase, owing to the fact that as a movement it had "no real center."<sup>34</sup> Like most commentators, he focuses largely on the writers and poets, offering a cogent analysis of the regional variations of this impulse towards militant and culturally assertive artistic expression. He is interested in how the writers, particularly Neal and Baraka, theorize the role of the music in black culture, especially as a model for aesthetic decisions and directions in other arts.

My reading of the Black Arts idea includes Smith's definition, and would add to it an impetus to celebrate blackness, and Africa as the ancestral homeland of African

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>33</sup> Ya Salaam, Kalamu. *The Magic of Jujū: An Appreciation of the Black Arts Movement*. Unpublished. Page 148.

Americans: to advocate healing, unity and liberation for black people; and to condemn white supremacy in its various manifestations. Populism is also an important element. the desire as artists to communicate clearly and be accessible to black people. to speak specifically to them in their own language and environment. is a hallmark of much BAM work. In my view, to the extent that one finds such themes in works of art produced during this period, one could say that such works reflect the existence of a Black Arts movement, even if the artist did/does not employ such terminology. Leaving aside the question of self-identification, what are the defining properties of BAM activity? For Smith, they include the construction of a black as opposed to a Negro identity, the quest for a black aesthetic, and “the quest for new modes of expression based on African American traditions.”<sup>35</sup>

The fact is that there does not come a time when a coterie of musicians identifies itself or its members as Black Arts movement participants. For example, many noted jazz artists such as Sun Ra, Albert Ayler, Andrew Hill, Pharoah Sanders, John Coltrane were supporters of and performers at Amiri Baraka’s short-lived (1965) Black Arts Repertory Theatre and School (BARTS), but one will search in vain for public claims of Black Arts membership by any of them. Likewise, in the later more populist moment of the late 1960s and early 1970s, such archetypically Black Arts practitioners as Gary Bartz and Doug Carn make no mention of an allegiance to a Black Arts Movement. Thus, the question of BAM and jazz is by definition one of external categorization rather than self-identification.

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<sup>34</sup> Smethurst, James Edward. *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005. Page 15.

## JAZZ HISTORIOGRAPHY

Scott DeVeaux, among others, has challenged the great man theory of jazz, as well the idea that its history is properly seen as one where constant and progressive innovation marks the only significant developments.<sup>36</sup> Although there has been recognition of the deficiencies in this basic framework, it still holds in much of the literature that tries to trace the music's history. A good starting point is the noble *The History of Jazz* by Ted Gioia. Although the book begins (in a chapter called "The Prehistory of Jazz") with a focus on the *collective* nature of AA musical practice as seen in the emergence of early blues and jazz, it soon begins the more familiar linear narrative of the musical accomplishments of the great individual musicians.<sup>37</sup> Regarding post-1950s jazz history, he advances the fragmentation theory of jazz, holding that after hard bop's 1950s heyday, the music went in many differing directions, escaping for the first time the capacity to be encompassed by a unitary narrative. For Gioia, the 1960s and 1970s is told by looking at certain key innovators and bandleaders, organized by a general framework of free jazz, fusion, and unclassifiable giants. The extent to which this rising tide of black cultural nationalism I am positing enters his account is minimal. He takes note of Miles Davis' and Herbie Hancock's electronic forays as attempts to engage young black audiences. The jazz organizations of the 1960s receive one page total space, with the AACM getting the bulk of it. The focus is on avant garde musical practice, with no note taken of cultural or attitudinal aspects. This narrative, in which

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<sup>35</sup> Smith, 327.

<sup>36</sup> For example: DeVeaux, Scott. *The Birth of Bebop*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

<sup>37</sup> Gioia, Ted. *The History of Jazz*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

the time period is characterized by fusion and free jazz, is common.<sup>38</sup> Gioia acknowledges Andrew Hill, Wayne Shorter, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Albert Ayler, Sun Ra, Ornette Coleman, and Cecil Taylor. It is a work of great breadth but there's almost nothing present which articulates what I am calling Black Arts jazz, in keeping with his focus on musical innovation, and his relative neglect of institutional and cultural phenomena. Strata East, Pharoah Sanders, Gary Bartz, Doug Carn, and Woody Shaw are all absent.

Indeed, the histories of jazz that serve as textbooks have no space for these figures, as the dominant narrative focuses on free jazz and fusion as the story of the 1970s, while treatments of a few key figures – John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Albert Ayler, Ornette Coleman, sometimes Sun Ra and Cecil Taylor serve as the frame of reference to discuss these decades. It is the classic narrative of the great men and progress which seems to mandate the fragmentation theory of jazz in the 60s and beyond. The idea that there is a center that Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Woody Shaw, Gary Bartz, Doug Carn, and Pharoah Sanders represent is not considered. These texts are built to serve jazz survey courses focusing on representative musical examples and have limited briefs to investigate social and cultural contexts, and make no claims to comprehensiveness, in any case. In *Jazz From Its Origins to the Present* (1993) Porter and Ullman follow this script, finding space to consider Don Cherry and Anthony

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<sup>38</sup> For example: Ward, Geoffrey and Ken Burns. *Jazz: A History of America's Music*. New York: Knopf, 2002.

Braxton, to reference Archie Shepp as a figure of extramusical cultural significance, and to acknowledge the AACM.<sup>39</sup>

Frank Tirro in *Jazz: A History* updates his 1977 textbook with attempts to provide social and cultural references for the jazz of the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>40</sup> Free jazz and fusion and the troika of Coleman, Coltrane, and Miles Davis remain the main frame, but he takes note of the interest in Africa in the 1970s by McCoy Tyner and also Herbie Hancock's Mwandishi band. (However, he fails to as much as mention Randy Weston and the earlier Africa thrust.) Tirro muses on the nature of jazz historiography, noting that all jazz narratives are necessarily incomplete, especially given the stylistic diversity that exists at every given point in post-World War II jazz. He does find a way to give Max Roach's *Freedom Now Suite* and Shepp's *Things Have Gotta Change* a sentence each in summing up the 1970s. This serves as the entire recognition of the Black Arts appeal in jazz, for Shaw, Rahsaan, Bartz, et. al. are nowhere to be found.

#### **Accounts of Jazz in the 1960s and 1970s**

One of the few monographs to mention Doug Carn is Stuart Nicholson's *Jazz-Rock: A History*. Nestled into this expansive survey of amalgams and hybrids of jazz and rock is a chapter on R&B-influenced jazz of the late 60s and 70s. The focal point of this chapter is the Crusaders, who "found a winning way with lightweight tunes based on solid rhythms and unpretentious solos"<sup>41</sup> The Black Jazz label receives three paragraphs of coverage, wherein Carn's albums are briefly considered. Carn's music is

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<sup>39</sup> Porter, Lewis and Michael Ullman. *Jazz From its Origins to the Present*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993. Pages 406-9, 412-15.

<sup>40</sup> Tirro, Frank. *Jazz: A History*. New York: Norton, 1993.

described as a mix of “the bebop tradition, Coltrane, and the electric fusion of jazz and rock,” and he is given credit as a “strong soloist” but Nicholson finds the albums marred by Jean Carn’s “inflexible” singing and “stiff” phrasing.<sup>42</sup>

Michael Budds’ *Jazz in the Sixties* considers the “expansion of musical resources and techniques,” but in the revised edition (1990) adds a chapter on “Extra-musical Connotations: New Purposes.”<sup>43</sup> He takes up jazz as program music, as religious expression, and as social protest. Archie Shepp and John Coltrane are featured primarily in this chapter, though McCoy Tyner’s liner notes for his 1970 recording *Extensions* merits attention as an example of artists linking their music to the “struggles and sufferings of Black people.”<sup>44</sup>

To date, Valerie Wilmer’s *As Serious As Your Life: The Story of the New Jazz* (1977) remains the single monograph that covers a significant portion of what I am calling the Black Arts impulse in jazz.<sup>45</sup> One of its major strengths is extensive use of direct quotes of musicians, especially the non-famous. The book evokes a sense of community and accurately depicts the precarious economic/professional state of the avant garde black jazz musician in the U.S. It focuses on New York, like many jazz projects. It successfully highlights the musicians’ desire for greater economic control, as the final section of the book takes up efforts at independent recording ventures and

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<sup>41</sup> Nicholson, Stuart. *Jazz-Rock: A History*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1998. Page 212.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 215-16.

<sup>43</sup> Budds, Michael J. *Jazz in the Sixties: The Expansion of Musical Resources and Techniques*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1990. Page 97.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>45</sup> Wilmer, Valerie. *As Serious as Your Life: The Story of the New Jazz*. London: Pluto Press, 1977.

documents the activities of the Jazz and People's Movement led by Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Lee Morgan. Although the first half of the book is comprised of profiles of the usual innovators – Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, Sun Ra, Cecil Taylor, Albert Ayler, and the AACM – it explores issues of gender, finance, and race as experienced by artists without this high level of name recognition.

### **JAZZ AND RACE HISTORICALLY**

One essential fact complicates the notion of a discrete Black Arts movement in jazz: many of its practitioners from the earliest days conceived of this music as an inherently black art. Certainly Sidney Bechet and Duke Ellington, among the first generations of jazzmen, articulated this concept. Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker sought to extend the development of a threatened black music in the 1940s, and in the 1950s Mary Lou Williams, Charles Mingus and Art Blakey discussed jazz as the music of the American Negro. Major trends in jazz history such as bebop, hard bop, soul- and gospel-jazz, have been defined accurately as efforts to reconnect with black roots and audiences. In addition, the theme of Africa and African ancestry, such a critical component of Black Arts aesthetics and philosophy, had been explored in jazz long before 1965 by Duke Ellington, Art Blakey, Yusef Lateef, Sun Ra, and especially Randy Weston (who, perhaps ironically, spent most of the Black Arts years in Morocco): The point to be stressed here, then, is that the specific Afrocentric developments that we see in jazz during the Black Arts era have long roots in the history of the music and were the product of more than the ideological currents of the time. (Of course, this is true of politics and other artistic genres as well.) The following discussion looks briefly at four specific periods in jazz history prior to the late 1960s to see how African American jazz

musicians articulated their understandings of the relationship between racial identity and the music called jazz.

### First Generation

In examining the words of musicians such as Sidney Bechet, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Doc Cheatham, one sees the obvious pride with which they purvey their art as an expression of their people's culture, and cultural achievement. As jazz became a commercial and critical phenomenon in the 1920s, the musicians considered it a creation of the African Americans, despite the color line, the fame of Paul Whiteman as the "King of Jazz," and arguments to the contrary from the likes of Nick LaRocca.<sup>46</sup> There was little need to proclaim the music as black art because it was understood and obvious to those with any degree of discernment. Segregation made it clear to the musicians. This music's qualities were considered to be upbeat, danceable, exciting, life-affirming, and spontaneous. It contrasted with much popular music of the day, and eventually heavily influenced it. It was viewed largely as entertainment, dance music, rather than expressive of greater socio-cultural intent. And yet, Sidney Bechet, looking back in his late 1950s autobiography, offered this assessment of the music's substance:

All the beauty that there's ever been, it's moving inside that music. Omar's voice, that's there, and the girl's voice, and the voice the wind had in Africa, and the cries from Congo Square, and the fine shouting that came up from Free Day. The blues, and the spirituals, and the remembering, and the waiting, and the suffering, and the looking at the sky watching the dark come down - that's all inside the music.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Some white musicians like Whiteman and LaRocca "insisted that blacks had no role in creating jazz." See: Peretti, Burton W. *The Creation of Jazz: Music, Race, and Culture in Urban America*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994. Pages 80 and 189.

<sup>47</sup> Bechet, Sidney. *Treat it Gentle*. New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1978. Page 218.

Bechet makes a claim that the historical experiences of African Americans are integral to the production and aesthetics of jazz, ragtime, the blues. In his legendary Omar story from *Treat It Gentle*, the music is an expression and reflection of the slavery experience, dreams of love and the lost homeland Africa, racial oppression and the longing to be free, "a kind of melody that had a crying inside itself."<sup>48</sup> The reedman's poetic allegory predates Amiri Baraka's more polemical assertions of a Negro essence in black music by several years, and reflects an idea which is expressed by other early jazz artists regarding cultural (racial) differences in musical "feeling" and audience receptivity. Similar arguments had been made also by earlier intellectuals such as Langston Hughes and Sterling Brown.

Bechet declared that "it's awful hard for a man who isn't black to lay a melody that's come deep out of black people. It's a question of feeling."<sup>49</sup> As one who taught and played with many non-black musicians, he was less making invidious racial distinctions than claiming a special challenge and responsibility for black artists. Along these same lines, Doc Cheatham, who also played in countless interracial bands, remarked that he "can tell a black musician from a white musician blindfolded, any time" because of "the difference in feeling that comes out of the bell of the horn."<sup>50</sup> Later, in 1943, Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown and Beige* suite was critiqued as having

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>50</sup> Cheatham, Adolphus "Doc". *I Guess I'll Get the Papers and Go Home: The Life of Doc Cheatham*. London: Cassell, 1998. Page 17.

broached the confines of “jazz”, to which Ellington replied that he did not “make any attempt at playing jazz or swing,” but played “unadulterated American Negro music.”<sup>51</sup>

It is true that at many points in the recorded history of jazz performers took up African themes, if primarily in song titles and the suggestion of hot propulsive rhythm, for which Africa was a signifier. Tiny Parham and His Musicians recorded such tunes as “The Head Hunter’s Dream (An African Fantasy),” “Jungle Crawl,” and “Voodoo” for Victor in 1928. Earlier examples include John Philip Sousa’s 1899 “An African Fantasy,” which shared the bill with other tunes like “A Coon Band Contest” and “Who Dat Say Chicken in Dis Crowd,” indicative of the minstrel-driven ethos of the racial reference. Duke Ellington would eventually write pieces like “La Plus Belle Africaine” and “Fleurette Africaine” in the 1960s, and from the 1920s on drew musical portraits of black people through the Harlem motif as well as pieces such as “Black and Tan Fantasy,” “Black Beauty,” and others. However, in the 1920s and 1930s, Africa was not a reference point for his rhetoric, other than the unfortunate labeling as “The Jungle Band” that was foisted on the group from time to time by his manager. “Jungle Night in Harlem” (1930) and “Echoes of the Jungle” (1931) were tunes that came closest to referencing Africa, and obviously partook of the primitivist dialogue.

The same can be said of the Jungle Town Stompers (Louis Metcalf, Elmer Snowden, and Luis Russell were among the members of this quintet), who in 1929 recorded “African Jungle” for OKeh. “Harlem Congo” by Chick Webb and His Orchestra from 1937, an up-tempo hard swinging number that has no exotic flourishes, seems to carry a different message not steeped in primitivism, a tune whose

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<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Denning, Michael. *The Cultural Front*. London: Verso, 1996. Page 315.

sophistication and drive accentuate a spirit of elegance and refinement as a part of the irresistible rhythm that was the stock in trade of the modern dance band. "African Ripples" by Fats Waller in 1934, a solo piano piece, was referred to by one annotator as a "typical parlor piece in American living rooms," indicative of the non-presence of "Africanisms."<sup>52</sup> Sidney Bechet's "Egyptian Fantasy" recorded in 1941, unlike his "Jungle Drums" of 1938 which highlights the bass drum of Zutty Singleton, is relatively straightforward New Orleans style swing.

Indeed, the linking of jazz and primitive notions of a racialized essence of black hot rhythm was prevalent at the commercial beginnings of the jazz industry. The stage shows with neo-African themes, complete with little dressed women shaking their things and drumming features, continued this theme. It extended beyond jazz of course, and in the writing of both white and black authors in the 1920s the association of Africa with some elemental rhythmic nature, drums in the soul, a more natural self, was common. This can be seen in two poems from this era, each entitled "Heritage," by Countee Cullen and Gwendolyn Bennett. Images of heathens, drums, and wild music dominate the vision of ancestral African traditions.<sup>53</sup> This can also be seen clearly in the jungle allusions generally foisted on bands such as Ellington's. Club names such as the Zanzibar were outnumbered by southern theme names such as Club Alabam, the Cotton Club, the Plantation Club and the like.

### **Bebop**

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<sup>52</sup> Stahl, Irwin. "Notes on the Music." *One Never Knows, Does One? The Best of Fats Waller*. RCA Records, 1978.

<sup>53</sup> In Johnson, James Weldon, ed. *The Book of American Negro Poetry*. San Diego, New York, and London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1959. Page 221-225, 245.

Though the bebop movement was by no means racially exclusive, its players sought to distance themselves from the white commercial world of swing that had come to dominate jazz. This more “real” music that they sought to perform was hyper-diatonic, focused on harmonic logic and knowledge, mastery of the western system of musical organization. These black musicians took pride in creating something which was their own, new innovation, a new black music. The legends of concerns about other musicians (typically white but blacks also) stealing their licks and ideas testifies to the sense of community and identity created by these men. Writers and scholars have duly noted the militant aura bop’s jagged edges seemed to present to World War II United States, demonstrating the sense in which Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker and others sought to project a more assertive posture of black manhood. (That part of this assertiveness was a greater willingness to publicly consort with white women seems a valid consideration.) Though race rarely appeared as part of the public transcript of these artists, as a subtext, and in the recollections of private conversations, the question of racial identity and its consequences was a constant concern. Dizzy Gillespie explained, “we didn’t go out and make speeches or say, ‘Let’s play eight bars of protest.’ ... The music proclaimed our identity; it made every statement we truly wanted to make.”<sup>54</sup> They sought dignity as black creative artists performing music which required and displayed extreme virtuosity and thorough musical knowledge. The boppers’ political astuteness had been preceded by jazz musicians who had expressed analogous ideas during Popular Front protests as outlined in Michael Denning’s *The Cultural Front*. Examples include Ellington’s experimental portrayal of black history

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<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Denning, 335.

through musical theater in *Jump for Joy* and Billie Holliday's rendering of Abel Meeropol's anti-lynching song "Strange Fruit" which she performed during her residency at Café Society and even at a May Day rally in 1941.<sup>55</sup>

Dizzy Gillespie also wrote of the boppers' struggle to liberate themselves and their music from the tyranny of the dance bands.<sup>56</sup> This pursuit of recognition as artists and the rejection of the heretofore primary function of providing dance music significantly changed the audience dynamic for the music. As DeVaux's *The Birth of Bebop* points out, the emergence of small combo jazz (and bebop) represented the advent of the jam session aesthetic, wherein musical dialogue and skill display between musicians was the primary impulse, rather than meeting a paying audience's entertainment expectations.<sup>57</sup> This notion of an elevated erudite black art liberated from the functionality of dance music would take jazz in interesting directions, ultimately leading to a 1960s avant garde on one hand, and the blues-drenched tropes of hard bop on the other, each modes of pursuing an idea of racial authenticity and appeal. In the meanwhile, there was Chick Webb Orchestra veteran Louis Jordan, who took the music down yet another path.

Louis Jordan, who would come to be called the "father of rhythm and blues," felt that the modern jazzmen played mostly for themselves. In contrast to this, the concept for his hugely popular Tympany Five was to "play for the people ... not just a few hep

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<sup>55</sup> Denning, 309-19 and 343.

<sup>56</sup> Gillespie, Dizzy with Al Foster. *To Be or Not to Bop*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1979. Page 173.

<sup>57</sup> DeVaux, Scott. *The Birth of Bebop*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. (Chapter five.)

cats.”<sup>58</sup> Jordan sought to connect with audiences with his jump blues and novelty numbers, the lyrics of which employed black vernacular speech and sang joyously of Saturday night fish fries and other scenes of African American life. "Saturday Night Fish Fry"'s portrayal of police abuse notwithstanding, many questioned Jordan's trading in minstrel era stereotypes in tunes such as "Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens." He was tremendously popular in African American communities, a superstar of the black entertainment world who enjoyed success with white audiences during the 1940s. This last fact is of no small significance, for the question of cross-racial appeal of black referentiality in entertainment is important to consider when discussing the notion of black art, or even "Black Arts." With Jordan and bebop, two distinct approaches to articulating of the idea of blackness emerge from the music during the World War II era.

### **Soul Jazz**

In the late 1950s two trends in jazz known as hard bop and soul jazz appear that are often viewed as reactions among jazz musicians to the popularity and extensive press coverage of the putatively "white" cool school, as represented by the bestselling Dave Brubeck and Chet Baker. The soul movement in jazz, which was in fact responsible for popularizing the modern concept of soul as an essential aspect of African American culture, is especially germane to the present discussion.<sup>59</sup> Usually dismissed in jazz histories, and regularly lamented by the jazz press during the time (including Baraka, who was more disparaging than most), this embracing of black

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<sup>58</sup> Shaw, Arnold. *Honkers and Shouters: The Golden Years of Rhythm and Blues*. New York: Collier Books, 1978. Page 66.

<sup>59</sup> For more on the soul movement in jazz, see, for example: Rosenthal, David H. *Hard Bop: Jazz and Black Music 1955-1965*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

vernacular motifs in musical structures and gestures, and song and album titles, was met with great acceptance by largely black audiences. Large doses of gospel tinges and the blues proved to be a winning formula for many.

1955 was the breakout year for Ray Charles, whose new synthesis of gospel and blues and attendant immense popularity got the attention and respect of a great number of musicians. The next year witnessed organist Jimmy Smith's spectacular emergence as a recording and performing sensation. In addition to his mind blowing technique on a then uncommon jazz instrument, and his relentless funkiness, Smith foregrounded black community iconography with song/album titles such as *House Party* (1957), *The Sermon* (1958), and *Back at the Chicken Shack* (1960). With his success, the stereotypical soul jazz combo of organ, tenor saxophone, guitar, and drums soon became nearly ubiquitous in urban music venues across the country. Shirley Scott, Jack McDuff, Groove Holmes, and many other talented organists established successful careers in Smith's wake.

Horace Silver is another towering figure of this movement, a major songwriter, bandleader, and pianist who won long term international fame. His blues-drenched compositions and earthy titles – "The Preacher," "Sister Sadie," "Filthy McNasty" – were emblematic of the period and quite influential. Charles Mingus, often thought of as an experimentalist, made some of his greatest music during this time, steeped in gospel and blues and bearing black appeal titles like "Better Git Hit In Your Soul," "Moanin'," and "Hog Callin' Blues." Cannonball Adderley, whose successful solo career was launched with pianist Bobby Timmons' classic "Dis Here," may have been the most popular, and the most criticized, of the musicians considered part of the soul movement.

A number of pianists and trios, including Ahmad Jamal, Ramsey Lewis, Les McCann, and the Three Sounds became successful acts with large black fan bases during this period, and would also be generally put down by the jazz press for producing formulaic funk and gospel derivations.<sup>60</sup>

To be sure, soul became a marketing tool for record companies, which by 1960 were taking out ads in the jazz press proclaiming **“The Soul of Atlantic”** and **“Everybody’s Talking about SOUL but Riverside’s got it!”** There were also enough accusations of insincerity by musicians themselves as well as critics to conclude that there were some who adopted funkiness, and the mantle of soul, in pursuit of greater commercial viability. The important point here is whom such appeals were directed toward. This music was marketed to and consumed by a primarily African American audience, according to a former employee of Prestige (“Despite Opposition of Critics, Prestige Gave Birth to Soul Jazz!”).<sup>61</sup>

### THE EARLY CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT ERA

While the soul jazz era extends into the early 1960s, signs of greater racial self-awareness tied to important international and domestic movements were also present in jazz in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Musicians’ conceptions were deeply impacted by the emergence of independence in Africa and the rising US civil rights movement. John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, Max Roach, Randy Weston, Nina Simone, Abbey Lincoln,

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<sup>60</sup> Examples include: Leonard Feather’s review of *Ramsey Lewis In Chicago*, *Down Beat*, 2 February 1961 and Frank Kofsky’s review of Lewis’ *More Music From The Soil*, *Down Beat*, 25 May 1961. Also see pianist Elmo Hope’s comments in the *Down Beat* profile “Bitter Hope,” *Down Beat*, 5 January 1961.

<sup>61</sup> “[O]ur sales were overwhelmingly to blacks – not just tenor and organ stuff but hard bop too.” Quoted in Rosenthal, 62. Advertisement quote is from *Down Beat*, 11/24/60.

Babatunde Olatunji, and Ahmed Abdul-Malik all displayed in their work a profound awareness of and homage to Africa as well as varying degrees of support for the anti-segregation activists of the U.S. This reflected personal interest and support rather than full scale advocacy for the most part, but several of these figures, Coltrane and Roach in particular, would become icons of jazz as black resistance music. These two had very different approaches, Roach as outspoken and direct in confronting white supremacy, Coltrane the taciturn introspective one whose music and song titles were deeply Afrocentric without in any way being overtly "political." Curiously, Weston rarely figures into Black Arts writers' accounts, though he is quite well documented in jazz literature. His devotion to Africa, exploration of African roots, and eventual move to the continent in 1967 make his story a crucial part of jazz and Pan-Africanist thought. Mingus' on-stage ranting and grumbling, in addition to his music titles and introductions, foregrounded questions of Negro citizenship rights and the exploitation of jazz artists in many ways.<sup>62</sup> The latter was explored more fully in his autobiography *Beneath the Underdog* which, though published in 1971, had been begun early in the 1960s. In the early 1960s, Nina Simone had been known to make civil rights movement endorsement gestures and played a variety of musical forms, including gospel and blues, which conveyed an embrace of black culture. An eclectic imperious performer, she faced her turning point in 1963 with the church bombing in Birmingham, and by 1964 had begun to write and perform material which often angrily called for the goals of the civil rights movement. As Ruth Feldstein points out, Simone's iterations of nationalism

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<sup>62</sup> For example: Mingus, Charles. "Meditations on Integration." on *The Great Concert of Charles Mingus*. Prestige Records, 1972. And Mingus, Charles. "Fables of Faubus."

often came before such ideas achieved widespread currency in national discourse. “Four Women” is but one example of this trend in her career. Once again, however, Simone rarely figures significantly in discussions of jazz or Black Arts history.<sup>63</sup>

The discographies of several specific artists shed some light on the growing Africa consciousness manifesting in jazz. Although known for the oft-repeated quote that “jazz don’t have nothing to do with Africa,”<sup>64</sup> in fact drummer Art Blakey was one of the most prolific artists in the realm of Africa-derived recordings. He did a duet with congera Sabu in November 1953 entitled “Message from Kenya.” which appeared on LP and was also released as a 45. In the West in 1953, Kenya meant the sensationalist coverage of what was called the Mau-Mau rebellion, the armed uprising against British colonialism that alerted the world to the urgency of decolonization. The drums denote this uprising. Beginning in 1957, Blakey recorded a dozen LPs for Blue Note that either in total or in part featured hand drums and neo-African performances. As Ingrid Monson points out, Blakey was later dismissive of these efforts, and they did not often attract big sales or positive reviews, two factors which account for their relative invisibility in jazz history.<sup>65</sup> These forays into collaborations of diasporic percussion traditions continued intermittently throughout Blakey’s run with Blue Note (May 1964 was his last session for the label), with tunes such as “The Witch Doctor” and “The Egyptian” making their appearance. Monson points out that his “awareness of African diasporic drumming...

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on *Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus*. Candid Productions, 1989.

<sup>63</sup> Feldstein, Ruth. “‘I Don’t Trust You Anymore’: Nina Simone, Culture, and Black Activism in the 1960s.” *Journal of American History*. Vol. 91, No. 4 (March 2005).

<sup>64</sup> Interviewed in: Taylor, Art. *Notes & Tones: Musician to Musician Interviews*. New York: Perigree, 1977. Page 242.

surpassed his contemporaries."<sup>66</sup> He also performed a drum solo as the title tune of his *Freedom Rider* LP, recorded May 27, 1961, during the crest of this campaign's press coverage.

The work of Babatunde Olatunji is also critical in the development of a consciousness among artists in this time period. Arriving from Nigeria in 1950 to attend Morehouse and pursue medicine, Olatunji found himself becoming an increasingly busy cultural ambassador in the decade, organizing cultural events and eventually raising a performance troupe to present music and dance from his homeland.<sup>67</sup> This led to him moving to New York and gaining some notoriety and exposure, which in turn brought him to the attention of Columbia Records. The recording of *Drums of Passion* in August and October 1959 (the LP was released April 1960) was historic in that "African music" was reaching a large American audience. On this first album Olatunji used drums percussion and vocals only, but subsequent LPs included the likes of Yusef Lateef, Clark Terry, George Duvivier, and Al Schackman, Nina Simone's longtime guitarist. This merger of African drums and jazz was perhaps most successful on "Uhuru" from *Flaming Drums*. Olatunji's presence including the New York City World's Fair appearances along with that of Miriam Makeba were living links of Africa with African American culture.

Another figure of undeserved obscurity in this discussion of Africa and jazz in this time period is Ahmed Abdul-Malik. Of Sudanese parentage though raised in the

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<sup>65</sup> Monson, Ingrid. "Art Blakey's African Diaspora." In *The African Diaspora*. Monson, Ingrid, ed. New York: Garland Publishing 2000. Page 343-344.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

U.S., this bassist recorded a series of LPs in the late 1950s, which attempt to merge Sudanese music particularly the playing of the oud with jazz. These recorded efforts predate all but Blakey's, as the first *Jazz Sahara* (Riverside) and *East Meets West* (Victor) date from October 1958 and March 1959 respectively. He recorded two LPs for New Jazz in 1961, 1962's *Sounds of Africa*, and one final LP for Prestige in 1963 entitled *The Eastern Moods of Ahmed Abdul-Malik*.

Randy Weston's interest in Africa has also been well documented, even though he is rarely mentioned in accounts of jazz and the Black Arts movement. It is perhaps ironic that his first professional forays into presenting African-themed music were as part of Marshall Stearns history of jazz programs, wherein Stearns would lecture on the evolution of the music, including its African roots, while Weston's group would provide musical examples.<sup>68</sup> This association with the summer programs at Lenox put the pianist in contact with many artists who he credits with teaching him much about culture, including Langston Hughes, Willie the Lion Smith, Babatunde Olatunji, and Candido.<sup>69</sup> He testifies to a pan-Africanist consciousness long before the 1960s, and this is reflected in his composition "Zulu" which was recorded in January 1955 for his Riverside LP *The Randy Weston Trio*, his third album as a leader. Another example appears in the 1958 Newport concert LP *New Faces at Newport*, where one of the cuts is titled "Excerpt from Bantu Suite."

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<sup>67</sup> See: Babatunde Olatunji. *The Beat of My Drum: an Autobiography*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005. (Chapters 4 and 5.)

<sup>68</sup> Palmer, Robert. "From Africa – Where His Roots Are." *New York Times*, 7 January 1973, 15.

<sup>69</sup> Crouch, Stanley. "Randy Weston's Pan-African Piano." *Village Voice*, 25 January 1983, 91.

The first major statement of his Africa focus on record was the November 1960 sessions that produced *Uhuru Africa*. This set of program music represents one of the most direct statements in jazz of identification with Africa, and its embrace of the liberation movements as manifested in bearing the title Uhuru (freedom, a term made familiar in the U.S. through news of the independence movement in Kenya). Langston Hughes wrote the lyrics, which were recited by actor Brock Peters. The album opens with shouts of "Uhuru," then the clarion call of the hand drums, sounded by Candido, Max Roach, Olatunji, and Armando Peraza. Tuntemeke Sanga takes over, speaking both Swahili and English, his soliloquy stressing the birth of new nations' freedom, "uhuru."

This introductory number is in some ways a theatrical portrayal of Africans, relying on the stereotype of drums and black skin, with texts rendered by stage actors. It is followed by Weston's tunes, "Uhuru Kwanza" and "African Lady," for which Hughes, who also wrote the liner notes for the record, wrote the words. (Abbey Lincoln would cover this song to much better effect on her *Straight Ahead* LP recorded three months after this session.) The lyrics of "African Lady" combine two themes: the luminous beauty of the black woman, and the dawn of freedom for a colonial people. The first line of the second stanza gives some sense of the song's ethos: "Bright lights flood the land/and tomorrow is in your hand." This album was released on Roulette Records, produced by Teddy Reig, and does not appear to have been reviewed by the jazz magazines. This was Weston's first of two albums for that label, after a short stint with Blue Note and a six LP run with Riverside to launch his recording career.

The next would be an album of highlife-based material, all save one piece an original, recorded in April 1963, and was called *High Life: Music of the New African*

*Nations*. This LP continued a celebratory attitude towards the success of the independence movement. Six horns and three hand drummers accompany the pianist and his rhythm section on arrangements by Melba Liston. “Blues to Africa” is dedicated to Olatunji and Miriam Makeba. “Congoles Children” inspired by a singing troupe of boys from a school in the Congo, presents an image of happy children “always” playing, dancing, and laughing. It completely ignores the terrible civil war engulfing the country and the Lumumba assassination for which the country was known in the early 1960s. (The title tune of Ike Quebec’s *Congo Lament*, recorded January 20, 1962, seems to capture this sentiment more realistically.) The unsigned liner notes quote Weston reiterating his belief that he was exploring an important part of his heritage in immersing himself in the world of African music. African music’s impact on the development of the blues and its influence on much of the music of the world.<sup>70</sup>

Weston seems to have not made the impact on the writers who would credit the consciousness in jazz for helping point them towards blackness. The fact is that no one in jazz was more vocal than he about the connections, importance, and personal identification with the culture of the mother continent. A factor of no little significance in this is his relative invisibility. Roulette Records simply did not have the presence in the jazz scene, they seem to have done little advertising, and the fact that his records were not reviewed in the press confined Weston’s appeal largely to those who could come to his gigs in New York. Compared to the publicity that John Coltrane received, and the budget that Impulse!, a subsidiary of ABC, was able to afford for packaging,

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<sup>70</sup> Liner notes on: Weston, Randy. *High Life: Music of the New African Nations*. Roulette Records, 1963.

layout, and especially advertising, Weston's African-inspired recordings were invisible. Weston, like many jazz performers, had very little regular access to recording studios and airplay after the Riverside period (his last record for them was in 1956). Thus, one of his greatest recordings, *Randy!* from October 1964, was one he produced and released himself, on his Bakton label, the label's only apparent release. Unsurprisingly, the few original copies that were pressed were unable to generate enough interest to bring the album to any wider attention, and it quickly became an out-of-print item. It was re-released in 1969 and in 1972 Atlantic Records put it out again, now rating as a lost classic and bearing the title *African Cookbook*, after its best known selection and a tour-de-force performance by Weston's greatest band, featuring Booker Ervin, Ray Copeland, Big Black, Harold Murray, Vishnu Wood, and Lennie McBrowne. What emerges in taking stock of Weston's work is a spirit of celebration, of Africa as a source of black identity and culture as well as a continent entering a new dawn of freedom.

John Coltrane was the other jazz avatar of Africa of the period, and certainly the most famous one. Manifestations of his interest in Africa date back to April 1957 with his *Dakar* LP. Cal Massey's "Bakai," which Coltrane recorded in May 1957, with its Arabic title (meaning "cry") and rhythmic call and response vaguely evokes Africa, according to Cole and Weinstein.<sup>71</sup> In August 1958 he performed on sessions led by flugelhornist Wilbur Harden for Savoy, recording tunes bearing the Afrocentric titles "Dial Africa," "Tanganyika Strut," and "Gold Coast." Trombonist Curtis Fuller wrote the latter two songs, whilst Harden was the author of "Dial Africa." Although

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<sup>71</sup> Cole, Bill. *John Coltrane*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1976. Page 79. And Weinstein, Norman C. *A Night in Tunisia: Imaginings of Africa in Jazz*. Methuen, NJ:

subsequent releases of these sessions would be called *Dial Africa* and bear Coltrane's name as leader, the original LPs were released under the flugelhornist's name and were called *Jazz Way Out* and *Tanganyika Strut*. Unlike Blakey's neo-African forays, or even Weston's incorporation of rhythms from the continent, these tunes reflect no obvious musical borrowings from Africa. In this sense they may be compared to a piece like Sonny Rollins' "Airegin," which nods to Africa (by spelling the soon-to-be independent Nigeria backwards) but is stylistically based on hard bop conventions. Though Coltrane, who typically performed with great passion and skill on the dates, would soon display evidence of his own pursuit of African culture, the reissues of the dates under his name and with the title *Dial Africa* added to his Afrocentric image in a way that perhaps overstates his continental focus at the time.

Coltrane's association with African themes is largely based on material that dates from late 1960 into 1961. He recorded "Liberia" in October 1960 and "Dahomey Dance" in May 1961, both near the end of his contract with Atlantic. But the core of his legacy in this regard was his first LP for Impulse!, his quartet augmented by Art Davis on bass and a ten piece horn section orchestrated by Eric Dolphy on *Africa/Brass*, recorded May and June of 1961. The title tune, a sixteen minute tour-de-force that has the basses droning, the horns evoking the cries of wild animals, and the impassioned tenor wailing along with Elvin Jones' polyrhythmic virtuosity, was a statement of cultural identification with the continent that had no corresponding verbal elaboration. Nor did the album contain any liner notes. As the debut album on the ABC affiliate by the hottest name in jazz, the LP was advertised and widely exposed, and Coltrane's

implicit message that Africa was a source of immense cultural riches and spiritual strength circulated in jazz circles, particularly among his African American jazz fans.

Although he had a continuing interest in the music and culture of Africa, the rest of his oeuvre did not reflect it in an overt manner. It is more evident in the way he looked to increasingly dense washes of sound with double basses and later experiments utilizing two drummers. He used song titles to signal his intensifying focus on spiritual matters. In the famous 1966 interview with Frank Kofsky he spoke of his interest in African sounds, though this would not be heard or read until after his death.<sup>72</sup> When one looks at how writers of the Black Arts eulogized him, African consciousness looms as a major theme. In Askia Toure's "JuJu," for instance, and Ebon Dooley's "Legacy: In Memory of 'Trane," Coltrane is a portal through which a mythic Africa beckons regeneration of black souls. As stated earlier, it is notable that there are no such corollary tributes to Weston in the literature.

The primary point to be made here is that the jazz world in the late 1950s early 1960s period does produce artists and artistic statements that engage the issues of identity and struggle around which the Black Arts will revolve. With Simone and Roach in particular, one sees the direct use of militant sentiment, lyrical treatment of racism, and the need to struggle against it that will become more prominent later in the decade. Though the artists I discuss will in few cases have the historical stature of this group of musicians, their work reflected the Black Arts impulse in important ways and needs to

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<sup>72</sup> Kofsky, Frank. *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music*. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970. Page 23.

be considered more central to the overall discussions of black cultural production in the Black Arts era. The work of these artists is the subject of chapter two.

## CHAPTER 2

### BLACK ARTS JAZZ – THE MUSICAL EVIDENCE

The aim of this chapter is to illustrate the range of musical statements in jazz typifying the Black Arts ethos during the Black Arts movement era. What emerges from this examination is clear evidence that the time period saw a significant amount of attention paid by jazz musicians to promoting the broad aims of the Black Arts movement through musical performance. The evidence presented in this chapter consists primarily of commercially released recorded albums.

Although, as the last section of chapter one indicates, an interest in Africa and human rights movements was extant in jazz in the later 1950s and early 1960s, in this later period there is a greater abundance of such material, as well as a rise in more militant expressions of these same concerns. This discussion is organized around several specific topics the musicians seemed drawn to: **Africa** and **freedom**, which we looked at in the earlier period, as well as two other concepts that one I am calling **black spirituality**, and **Blacknuss**, to use a coinage of Rahsaan Roland Kirk's. His tune bearing that title will be discussed below; I use this alternate spelling of blackness here as a nod to the wit and perceptiveness of this master musician, and to refer to the various ways musicians sought to articulate a sense of identity as African- descended human beings. In truth, many of the performances to be discussed deal with more than one of these themes, therefore my organization of them into specific areas is somewhat subjective.

In general terms, what differentiates the music of this later period from the earlier black jazz is a focus on didacticism, and often a radical edge seen earlier only in the work of Max Roach. In keeping with an observable increase in militancy among African Americans as a whole during the late 1960s (discussed in the introduction to this dissertation), the mood and statements expressed by jazz artists took white supremacy to task in a more outspoken manner, expressed anger and bitterness, continued employment of the long form as well as “harsh” sounds, and attempted to bring a populist element to jazz through greater use of vocals and lyrics.

## AFRICA

In the last chapter I discussed the rise of Africa as a theme in jazz in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as seen in the work of Weston, Abdul-Malik, Blakey, and Coltrane. Generally Africa was figured as a site of great cultural power, an ancestral homeland, and, with Weston in particular, as a continent rising into independence. Max Roach also directed listeners' attention toward the homeland. “All Africa” from Max Roach’s *Freedom Now Suite* is a list of names of African ethnic groups and ancient kingdoms (such as Dahomey) of the continent, sung by Abbey Lincoln over a bed of African drums. “Tears for Johannesburg,” an instrumental that opens with long mournful moans from Lincoln, makes one of the few direct references to the effects of white supremacy in Africa, clearly calling attention to the apartheid system of South Africa, and the infamous Sharpeville massacre of March 1960, five months before the recording session.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s Africa reemerged as a significant icon in the work of jazz musicians. While many of these performances continue the themes of

venerating a generalized and mythic homeland, in some cases this music is more didactic, and includes the use of vocals exhorting self-knowledge, nation-building, and revolutionary struggle.

### **Abbey Lincoln**

It is fitting to begin this discussion with what is perhaps Abbey Lincoln's greatest recording, the album *People In Me*, recorded in Japan in the summer of 1973. It contains two of the more significant and intriguing takes on Africa in jazz of the Black Arts era, her version of John Coltrane's "Africa" as well as the LP's title tune. The project was aided immeasurably by Miles Davis, whose band was touring Japan at the time. Responding to Lincoln's request for information about a suitable drummer for her trio session, Davis sent several members of his band: drummer Al Foster, saxophonist Dave Liebman, and percussionist James Mtume. According to Lincoln, Davis himself also came to the late night session "to make sure everything was right."<sup>73</sup> Despite its ad hoc nature, the band sounds energized, together, and extremely responsive to the leader's mood, swing, and feeling. Bassist and pianist Kunimitsu Lanba and Hiromasa Suzuki hold their own throughout, and Lincoln's singing throughout is powerful, assured, supple and free.

For the first time, Lincoln produced an album composed almost entirely of her own material, and in it she asserted a persona that embodied a number of themes: womanhood, love, Africa as the mother of all humanity, wholeness and healing. Her first recording since 1961's *Straight Ahead*, *People in Me* contained none of the overt

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<sup>73</sup> Liner notes to CD reissue of Lincoln, Abbey. *People in Me*. Inner City Records, 1979. (Reissued on Polygram, 1993.)

protest material many associated with Lincoln from her long tenure with Max Roach. (Though, in truth, it was primarily the *Freedom Now Suite* which engendered this perception.) The reality is that Lincoln always performed a range of material that included message songs as well as Oscar Brown life-advice songs, and love songs. This variety continues with *People In Me*, as exemplified by “Living Room,” a Max Roach instrumental she transforms rhythmically, adding lyrics that perhaps autobiographically tell of the need to give love room to grow, that it cannot be possessed. It’s one of several masterpieces on the album.

For some commentators, “Africa” is the standout track from this session. Mtume (discussed below), who according to Lincoln was unfamiliar with her work prior to this session, opens up on bells and rattle with the bass soon joining in. Then Lincoln enters, telling of world travels, to Paris and the Eiffel Tower, Honolulu, the Bay of Bengal, Malaya. This litany evokes associations with the dispersed nature of the African diaspora across time, and emphasizes the predicament of always being on the move, in search of an unreachable home. Though she has gone around the world, she has never found a home: “it must be written all [her] life to roam.” But “there’s a land of milk and honey on the river called the Nile,” a beautiful wonderful Africa, a promised land that one day she will come home to. Talking drums tell of a new and brighter day, when all will be right.

Africa is thus an imagined paradise that the seeker of the song longs for, to return to a Garden of Eden with riches untold. What is the import of this fantasy sung in 1973? According to the CD reissue liner notes, Lincoln wrote the lyrics during Coltrane’s lifetime, as she recalled once singing them for him at the Lincoln-Roach

residence.<sup>74</sup> Her lyric tells of a spiritual quest, a need to reorder oneself to one's roots. It asserts that only when the African American knows her continental cultural roots will she be whole. It celebrates the spirit of travel, the appreciation for other cultures, including Europe and the Pacific isles. Yet the piece ends not in fantasy, but in the existential condition of diaspora: separation, the continual quest that shall not end: "It's gonna be all my life to roam," are the last words she passionately wails. Musically, the band drives forward to a crescendo, Mtume driving them on congas, with Lincoln on top calling on an array of vocal effects, including screams and melismatic moans.

Is this an interpretation of Coltrane's meaning, or Lincoln's own ideas joining with the tenor giant's melody? Lincoln was known as an engaged artist, leading protests at the UN in 1961 against the Lumumba assassination, and working with the Black Panthers in Oakland, so there is no question that she was aware of the realities of Africa, such as mercenaries, civil wars, and ongoing armed struggles in various parts of the continent. None of that is in these lyrics; in fact there is no element of the real Africa present in this tale. It is all allegory, speaking of a Garden of Eden rapturously wrought, but never to be attained. It's a call to return to the source, the articulation of the need to reorder the self in the direction of acknowledgment of the life-affirming qualities of one's African ancestry. It joins the Black Arts battle to remind African Americans of their African heritage.

"People In Me," the title tune, offers a related but different take on the question of roots and identity. On one level it is a recognition of human unity, claiming that cultural identities are permeable and fluid. It affirms those who recognize the common

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

biological and cultural heritage of the species. The song opens up with an optimistic statement that despite wickedness and the coldness of life, there are good people on the planet, and there's always someone who will look out for you. And these good people, "the people we know," are the people who claim Indian, Irish, Hawaiian, Chinese, German, Japanese, and a host of other cultures from across the globe as part of their ancestry, some of the "people in me." The chorus concludes "I got the whole of Africanus turning in me," referencing the broader fact that humanity originated on the African continent, and thus claiming an ultimate African identity for the whole species. Not until the last two verses does Lincoln's list of peoples include African countries (not cultural groups, as she sang on "All Africa"); but from this point in the song only African countries are mentioned.

The song therefore takes the listener around the world and ends up squarely in Africa, as she reels off thirteen African countries as part of the "people in me." Again, this is not a literal genealogical family tree, for in this telling her roots spread far beyond the West African areas from which most North American-bound slave trade victims were captured. Her claiming of other world cultures is likewise generous. But whom is she speaking for when she recounts all the "people in me"? The piece starts out talking about the people who say they have all these people in them, then seems to shift to a more personal approach by focusing on Africa. It can be read as an expression of American (United States) identity, given the nation's image as "e pluribus unum." Or it could be read as a more expansive view of African American identity specifically. This latter interpretation is given credence in the notes on the CD reissue. Lincoln wrote the song after a trip to Africa, where, she said, "I finally realized when I was over there that

I wasn't bastardized, as I had been led to believe – I was a pure-blooded American."<sup>75</sup> In any case, Lincoln's use of Africa as an icon on this album continues the pattern set down earlier, wherein the continent exists primarily as a source of black identity, and not so much as a living site of specific struggles for human rights and meaningful independence.

### Mtume

The aforementioned James Mtume's first three contributions to jazz discography, the LPs *Kawaida* (1969), *Alkebu-lan: Land of the Blacks* (1971), and *Rebirth Cycle* (1974), merge the ancestral identity conception of Africa with acknowledgment of and engagement with African political realities. His more aggressively asserted Pan-Africanism made explicit connections to struggles within the United States, and thus mark this work as the product of the Black Arts era. Scot Brown has discussed Mtume's jazz career, focusing especially on the making of the *Kawaida* LP.<sup>76</sup> This useful analysis shows how Mtume enacted in jazz his strong beliefs in the message of Maulana (Ron) Karenga, having joined the US Organization in 1966 as a student at Pasadena City College. By the December 1969 recording of *Kawaida*, he had left the group, though he continued to be an advocate of the US philosophy of black cultural regeneration. (Baraka provides the LP's liner notes, which explicate Maulana Karenga's theory of revolutionary art.) *Kawaida* was largely instrumental, though in two numbers dedicated to the leaders ("Maulana," "Baraka"), the musicians chant their names on the heads of the tunes. The exception is the title tune "Kawaida," during

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

which the musicians recite the seven principles of the Nguzo Saba over free flute and light percussion accompaniment. Though Mtume was the only one who was a true believer in Karenga's philosophy, each musician recited their lines dutifully, presumably supporting the spirit of the desire for enlightenment. *Kawaida*, though essentially a project conceived and led by Mtume, was nominally his uncle Albert Tootie Heath's album, released independently on the O'Be label.

Mtume's second effort was a significantly larger enterprise. *Alkebu-lan* was recorded in July 1971 at The East, a definitive site of black cultural nationalism and host of a weekly live jazz policy that accentuated the raising of black consciousness (the focus of chapter 4). The LP was another self-produced effort, released on the Strata East label. By this time, the percussionist had organized the Mtume Umoja Ensemble and was able to employ for this date many major young talents, including Leroy Jenkins, Billy Hart, Stanley Cowell, Buster Williams, Carlos Garnett, Gary Bartz, Andy Bey, and Joe Lee Wilson.

"Invocation," which opens up the double-sided LP, and was later recorded in the studio by Mtume, is a monologue that explicitly links the music to the African American struggle for national liberation, and credits the Maulana as chief source of inspiration. Yusef Iman, CFUN (Committee for a Unified Newark) guru and expressive arts promulgator, was on hand to perform poetry on the title tune, exhorting listeners to return to their true identity. Children's voices were added on a couple of numbers, apparently after the original live sessions, which preach more nationalist sentiment. The

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<sup>76</sup> Brown, Scot. *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization and Black Cultural Nationalism*. New York: New York University Press, 2003. Pages 136-144.

closing number, "Sifa (The Prayer)," sets to music the US mantra "Sifa Zote Zende Kwa Mwana Weusi... All Praise is due to the black man."

Much of the album is free of overt didacticism, relying on the collective power of musicians improvising on modal vamps to convey the real power of the expression. One such number is "Saud," a tribute to pianist McCoy Tyner, the title being his Muslim name. (Tyner would be the subject of a musical tribute by Pharoah Sanders as well.) In addition to his stalwart work as a member of the famous John Coltrane Quartet, Tyner was recognized as a brilliant musician in his own right, and one whose pursuit of musical truth and identity often foregrounded Africa. "African Village" from *Time for Tyner*, the *Extensions* LP featuring the tune "Message from the Nile," and the *Asante* album are all examples of the way Tyner's musical and cultural interests corresponded to continuing fascination with the continent by significant numbers of African Americans, especially those of a nationalist bent. From the late 1960s Tyner incorporated congas and small percussion into many of his projects, and Mtume appeared on several of his LPs: *Asante* (1970), *Song for My Lady* (1972), and *Samaya Luca* (1974). Tyner never resorted to vocalizing or didactic liner notes as did Mtume, though his interest in black community issues could come out in interviews - depending on the interviewer.<sup>77</sup> He was a favorite at The East's Black Experience in Sound due to the power of his music and his self-presentation.

The title tune of *Alkebu-lan: Land of the Blacks* has Mtume introducing the piece with a preamble that notes he is "not just talking about Chad but also Chicago, not just Tanzania but also Tampa Florida... it's wherever black people are." This explicitly

Pan-Africanist intro sets the stage for a modal vamp and a slinky melody colored by wordless wailing of the vocalists, especially Joe Lee Wilson. Yusef Iman adds short bursts of exhortatory declamations, several times repeating the phrase “listen to the sound of freedom talking to ya.” Iman’s words emphasize the African American return to Africa as a source of identity and cultural-spiritual strength. Here, Alkebu-lan serves as a site within the consciousness of black people that can liberate their human potentials and aid their struggle against white supremacy, and also serve as a fount of black unity (*umoja*). The tune features intense soloing by tenor Carlos Garnett atop the dense swirl of percussion, Bartz’s alto lines, and Jenkins’ violin. This musical representation of the search within crests with an altissimo duet between Garnett and Bartz, leading to a percussion-based jam wherein Iman and the vocalists return. “The drums are calling you,” Iman intones as the piece ends with solos by Ndugu Chanceler on traps and Mtume on congas. Although traps and congas originate from the United States and Cuba respectively, here the drums signify the African tradition, alluding to the prevalence of that instrument in many coastal West African societies.

Africa, though unnamed, is also a key motif in “No Words,” primarily a showcase for Wilson and Bey, with third vocalist Eddie Micheaux also making contributions. It is a soulful vamp, with the vocalists wailing and uttering extraordinarily inventive cries and squawks, and melodically placed wild cries of jungle animals. Bey takes the melody form responsibilities, his supple baritone displaying his ability to render simple lines with variation and surprise, thus leaving Wilson free to play against the groove laid down by pianist Cowell and Williams on bass. He responds

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<sup>77</sup> Danson, Peter. “McCoy Tyner USA.” *Coda*, October 1981, Pages 5-7. (Interview.)

with raucous bird sounds, laughing owls morphing into classic Wilson blues shouting. Micheaux adds colors but is more generally supportive than taking the lead. Late in the eight minute performance he follows Wilson into a duet of forest sounds, pitches well beyond the normal range of the human voice. Here was an attempt to represent a non-Western sensibility and creativity that was at the core of the African American being, underneath the layers of American acculturation.

*Rebirth Cycle*, recorded in February 1974, is perhaps an even fuller realization of Mtume's musical vision of Africa. The band for the date is composed of stellar and accomplished jazz musicians, among them many who were on *Alkebulan*, such as Jenkins, Williams, Hart, and Cowell. In addition, vocalists Dee Dee Bridgewater and Jean Carn, bassists Cecil McBee and Michael Henderson, saxophonists Jimmy Heath, John Stubblefield, and Azar Lawrence, and guitarists Pete Cosey and Reggie Lucas are on the date. As with his other efforts, it was self-produced, and did not reach the market until 1977, when it was released on the small label Third Street Records.

Side one is an extended treatment of Mtume's tune "Sais," named after the ancient Egyptian city, the capital of the last native dynasty before the Persian conquest of 525 BC. The tune had been recorded before by both Sonny Rollins (*Horn Culture*, 1972) and Lonnie Liston Smith (*Cosmic Funk*, 1974) as much briefer instrumentals. On *Rebirth Cycle*, a hypnotic vamp with layers of horns, strings, and vocals on top will continue for twenty-plus minutes. In addition, Senegalese poet Muktar Mustapha recites a litany of cultural and technological achievements of the ancient African civilization. "This is the stolen legacy of black people," Mtume is quoted in the liner notes. This expression of black Egyptology followed a discourse prevalent in black nationalist

circles for some decades, and clearly nods to George James' *Stolen Legacy* as well as the works of Yosef ben-Jochannon. Although it dominates the record from a time standpoint, "Sais" is only one part of the LP's figuration of Africa.

"Cabral," a vocal piece sung by Bridgewater, is a tribute to the revolutionary leader of Guinea-Bissau's war of national liberation, Amilcar Cabral, who had been assassinated in January 1973. It is a dirge tempo ballad, told in first person from Cabral's point of view. "Ancient tears fill infant eyes" as his people suffer the chains of the unnamed foe. Noting that they had been "colonized and bred to serve some other's will," the leader repeats that "we will be free" and the tune closes, climaxing with the repeated cry of "revolution." This writer has of yet found no other reference to Cabral in U.S. pop culture than this compelling performance.

The album closes with "Umoja," another paean to Pan-Africanism, though it is contains no lyrics. Umoja, or unity, is the first of the seven principles of the Nguzo Saba. The tune opens with a brief bass duet between Williams and McBee, then four women enter singing the head, warbling sounds that do not appear to be any particular language, articulated in a nasal manner intended to evoke traditional African group singing, including trills and whoops. Underneath them, the rhythm section builds tension while the horns and strings play long plaintive lines full of feeling. On this album, then, Mtume successfully depicts the mythic lost African paradise of ancient Egypt, the contemporary rising African liberation struggle, and the pan-Africanist vision of African identity as a source of diasporic identity and unity. In so doing he brought to jazz a responsiveness to black cultural imperatives at one with themes of the Black Arts movement.

Other 1970s pieces that take up the Africa theme include two that reference another site of armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism, Mozambique. Led by Eduardo Mondlane and, after his assassination, Samora Machel, FRELIMO, the country's successful liberation movement and army, had the attention and respect of African American and other U.S. radicals. In September 1972 Juju (later Oneness of Juju) recorded their first album, *A Message from Mozambique*, released on Strata East. Similarly to Blakey's 1953 "Message From Kenya," it makes no overt reference to the anti-colonial war taking place there. In fact, the liner notes consist only of a poem by one "t.n.", which likewise avoids specific endorsement of FRELIMO, instead stressing a Pan-African voyage of self-discovery aided by the life-affirming qualities of the music. On the cover the group gathers around a shekere, each with painted faces evocative of African tribal culture. The LP does include such numbers as "Soledad Brothers," "Freedom Fighter," and "Make Your Own Revolution Now." Largely instrumental, it does include some chanting, particularly on the latter tune where the phrase "the revolution is not coming; the revolution is now, the revolution is right now" is repeated.

On the other hand, there is Archie Shepp's "Song for Mozambique," the signature tune from the 1975 Arista release *A Sea of Faces*. A pentatonic melody strongly reminiscent of Olatunji's "Uhuru," (from his 1962 Columbia LP *Flaming Drums*) the scant lyrics sung by Bunny Foy note simply that:

There's a beautiful sound that is heard  
It begins with an African word  
It's as heavy as stone and it's never alone  
But there's some folks who never have heard.

That word is, of course, Uhuru. The centerpiece of the performance is Shepp's recitation of his poem "A Sea of Faces," wherein the refrains of "Africa, Freedom" and "Uhuru Africa" repeat throughout, while the poem itself emphasizes a more collective Pan-African experience, especially highlighting images of African American music-making "Play dat banjo, black boy" being its first line, and "Blow Brother John, be a living thing" its final lines, invoking Coltrane as a source of delivery from the plight of oppression. FRELIMO took control of the capital city Maputo in April 1974, and declared the new state in June 1975. (It is perhaps relevant here to mention another 1975 recording with Mozambique in the title, "Mozambique" by Bob Dylan on his Columbia LP *Desire*. In contrast to Juju and Shepp, Dylan writes a song that makes no reference whatever to the country as a geopolitical entity; instead, it is a place of pretty girls and friendly people, sunny beaches, "couples dancing cheek to cheek," where there is "magic in a magical land." Given the context of successful revolutionary war, along with its attendant atrocities and brutality, this is an unusually remote lyric even for one as notoriously esoteric as Dylan.)

One last piece, Chico Freeman's 1979 India Navigation LP *Kings of Mali*, bears examination here. The title tune, a strong instrumental played with Jay Hoggard's ballophone as lead, it is a two part tribute to the West African empire's founder Sundiata Keita, and its most famous traveler, the stupendously profligate pilgrim Mansa Musa. The accompanying liner notes by one Marguerite E.T. Green offer brief synopses of these men and their achievements in statecraft. Here we see the musician using his material to educate about the glorious past of the black race with words, while communicating an affinity for and the strength of African musical traditions. This LP

appeared at a time when a thrust towards learning ancient African history was present in African American communities, an impetus spurred by the recent publication and distribution of popular works by historians Ivan van Sertima (*They Came Before Columbus*, 1978), Chancellor Williams (*The Destruction of Black Civilization*, 1979), Yosef ben-Jochanan (*Black Man of the Nile and His Family*, 1972), and new English translations of Cheikh Anta Diop (*The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality* (1974) and *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa* 1978). *Kings of Mali* is an example of how the music reflects a commitment to more informed awareness of the accomplishments of Africans, from a defensive assertion of historical worthiness to recovering documentation of deeds.

## REVOLUTION

In the previous chapter I identified freedom as a significant theme in jazz of the early civil rights movement era, in the sense of engaging or referencing the burgeoning human rights struggles in the United States and around the world. In the Black Arts era, this remains an obvious concern among musicians. What is different in this time period is the endorsement of revolutionary political figures and ideals in the music. As I stated in the introduction, the goal articulated by many civil rights workers, down to 1965 at least, was essentially the racial reform of American political, economic, and educational institutions: once segregation and black subjugation were removed from American life, the society would be healthy and just. As the limits of desegregation in ameliorating intransigent black poverty and political powerlessness became more apparent, the structures of United States society itself were called into question, leading to calls for African American self-determination, and revolutionary change: the

overthrow of existing structures. Whereas commentators such as Frank Kofsky and Baraka saw the “free” music of the black jazz avant garde of the mid-1960s as a direct analogue to this development, my discussion below focuses more on the element of direct verbal/lyrical statement that was more evident in the following years.<sup>78</sup>

Prior to the late 1960s, there had been notable political stands taken by jazz musicians in their music. Foremost, perhaps, was the legendary 1960 *Freedom Now Suite* by Max Roach, released on the small Candid label run by Nat Hentoff. With its cover photo of the recreation of the February 1960 Greensboro Woolworth sit-in, and its lyrical content which addressed slavery, rising African liberation, and the African American struggle, this LP was an uncompromising alignment of the artists with worldwide efforts to overcome white supremacy. Charles Mingus in the first half of the 1960s with pieces such as "Meditations on Integration" and "Freedom" likewise viewed his music and performances as opportunities to raise political consciousness and to disturb the status quo.

Several other artists made gestures towards the civil rights movement: the aforementioned May 1961 recording of "The Freedom Rider" by Art Blakey, and Lee Morgan's "Mr. Kenyatta," a tribute to the Kenyan resistance leader and new president Jomo Kenyatta, for his 1964 LP *Search for the New Land*. In July 1965 trumpeter Blue Mitchell wrote and recorded "March on Selma," a bluesy instrumental which appeared on his *Down With It* album and referenced the Alabama desegregation campaign of that spring. However, the later period would see artists embracing the movement for

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<sup>78</sup> See Kofsky, Frank. *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music*. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970.

liberation in significantly greater numbers and to a more outspoken degree, in keeping with the more pronounced polarization of United States culture at the time.

After noting nods to some the era's most visible radical icons, this section considers the work of artists who demonstrate this endorsement of revolutionary politics, seen in their music as well as in some cases their affiliations and support activities. I devote a significant amount of space to an emblematic group of the period, Gary Bartz Ntu Troop. In their attempt to merge avant garde aesthetic practices with overtly populist gestures, their constant projection of an Afrocentric, activism-oriented political and cultural philosophy, and their associations with and support of organizations and events involved in the black liberation struggle, the Troop exemplify the idea of a Black Arts movement in jazz.

### **Revolutionary Tributes: Angela Davis, Malcolm X**

Angela Davis, activist, Communist, ex-Black Panther, and scholar, became the subject of two noteworthy jazz tributes after becoming the United States' most famous fugitive and then "political prisoner" in August 1970, following Jonathan Jackson's ill-fated raid on the Marin County Courthouse. Captured in October 1970, she went on trial for capital murder in February 1972 and was acquitted of all charges that June. *Ostinato (Suite for Angela)* was the opening number on *Mwandishi*, the debut album of the Herbie Hancock Sextet released in the spring of 1971. The original LP's liner notes did not identify Davis as the honoree, though the *Jazz & Pop* reviewer speculated that she might be.<sup>79</sup> Likewise, Jymie Merritt's tune "Angela," recorded by Lee Morgan's band in September 1971 and appearing on the trumpeter's eponymous (and posthumous) LP the

following year, was not identified as a tribute to Davis. However, in performances, Morgan announced that it was written for “Sister Angela Davis.”<sup>80</sup> Morgan was often outspoken on questions of justice and equity, and had been active in the Jazz and People’s Movement protests; there’s no evidence that the writer consulted him for the gushing, innocuous notes that appeared on the album, which made no mention of this song’s significance.

Another tribute to the imprisoned activist appeared on Detroit reedman Wendell Harrison’s *A Message from the Tribe*, released in 1973 on Tribe Records. The album is notable for the inclusion of the song “Angela’s Dilemma,” dedicated to Davis. The cover features drawings of the leaders of the record label, Harrison and Phil Ranelin, and of Jeamel Lee, the vocalist. The Lee portrait has her wearing the emblematic giant Afro, such that the viewer must wonder if it is Lee or Angela Davis who is being drawn. The lyrics of “Angela’s Dilemma” predictably speak of the historic oppression of African Americans, warning that “this must all end,” that Davis, a “sister with much pride,” must go free.

Phil Cohran and the Artistic Heritage Ensemble offered the most full-blown tribute to Malcolm X, that ubiquitous icon of Black Power, in 1968. Entitled *The Malcolm X Memorial (A Tribute In Music)*, this suite, released independently on Zulu Records, had four parts corresponding to distinct phases in the modern black nationalist Christ symbol’s life, as a poor youth, a young hustler, the Nation of Islam firebrand, and the worldly Muslim cleric and human rights activist. The record seems to have received

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<sup>79</sup> Review of Herbie Hancock’s album *Mwandishi* in *Jazz & Pop*, June 1971. Page 46.

no mention by the jazz press, although *Down Beat* occasionally listed Ensemble performances in its "Ad Lib" roundup section. The first recorded jazz tribute to X was by Archie Shepp: his poem with music "Malcolm, Malcolm - Semper Malcolm" was recorded March 9, 1965, two weeks after the leader's assassination. Appearing on his *Fire Music* LP on Impulse!, the elegiac poem decries death as the fate of African Americans, invoking Charlie Parker as an example. The music that follows is abstract and lugubrious, Shepp's tenor leading David Izenon's bowed bass and J.C. Moses' bass and snare drum accents. More dynamic is a later performance, Don Pullen's "Dialogue Between Malcolm and Betty," recorded in Montreux in 1977. The pianist plays solo for the majority of the piece, careening through tender passages building up to questions, eruptions of turbulence, before the bass, drums and percussion come in to join the mellow groove, a serenity achieved at the cost of commitment. Included on Leon Thomas' debut album, *Spirits Known and Unknown* on Bob Thiele's new Flying Dutchman label was the tune "Malcolm's Gone," a lament recorded live with an uncredited Pharoah Sanders on tenor. Thomas makes the Christ comparison quite explicit, singing "I know he died to save me/ gave me my dignity." Spanning a period of twelve years, all these performances were recorded well before the recovery of Malcolm X to mainstream acceptance, when to evoke his image implied and often indicated an alliance with radical perspectives and organizations. These works stand as further evidence of the Black Arts impulse at work in jazz.

#### Clifford Thornton

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<sup>80</sup> See: Morgan, Lee. "We Remember You." Fresh Sound Records, 1991. (Performance was recorded January 28, 1972, three weeks before Morgan's death.)

Clifford Thornton is a notable and neglected figure for whom the late 1960s and early 1970s was a fertile creative period. Born in 1935, he worked with Sun Ra and Pharoah Sanders. His debut album *Freedom & Unity* was recorded July 22, 1967, incidentally the day after John Coltrane's funeral. It took him two years to release the record on his own Third World label. By that time the opening cut, written by the date's drummer Harold Avent, bore the title "Free Huey." (This could not have been the original title, as Black Panther Party leader Huey Newton would not be jailed until October 1967, and in fact was a little known figure prior to the shootout with Oakland cops that led to his arrest.) Though it is an abstract album, *Freedom & Unity* has a clear political alignment, evidenced by the LP title and the Huey song as well as the tune *Uhuru*, written by altoist Sonny King. The liner notes are written by Archie Shepp and Omette Coleman. Shepp's brief essay obscurely compares Huey Newton to Bigger Thomas, saying very little about the music, failing even to mention Thornton's name. Coleman offers a two page free verse which muses on different manifestations of the LP title "freedom and unity" throughout, stressing the spiritual communion of music, and the exploitation of creative artists in the United States.

In November 1970, Thornton made the live concert recording *The Panther and the Lash* in Paris for the French label America. The title was borrowed from Langston Hughes' posthumously published poetry volume of 1967. (It did contain a poem called "Black Panther," and Hughes' biographer concludes that the Oakland revolutionary organization, founded in October 1966, was the clear referent of the book's title.<sup>81</sup>)

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<sup>81</sup> Rampersad, Arnold. *The Life of Langston Hughes, Volume II: 1941-1967*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. Page 409.

Though Thornton's music and song titles display no obvious allusions to the poet besides the LP title, that is enough to see the project as a double tribute. The opening number there was Thornton's "Huey is Free," in recognition of the August 1970 release of the BPP Minister of Defense. Valerie Wilmer's liner notes claim that the trombonist "celebrates the thought, perception, and courage of the revolutionary leader who is, together with the late Malcolm X, directly responsible for uniting Black America."<sup>82</sup> Elsewhere on the album, the band continues the Panther tribute, performing two tunes by the French bassist on the date, Francois Tusques' "Right On!" and "Tout Le Pouvoir au Peuple," this last the French translation of "All Power to the People," the famous BPP slogan.

These musical gestures by Thornton reflected support of the organization that extended beyond music, as he performed at benefits for the BPP and was in February 1971 barred entry to France for his suspected membership in the party.<sup>83</sup> As a result of participating in the 1969 Pan-African Festival in Algeria, Thornton's interest in African and diasporic traditional musics blossomed and he increasingly studied and incorporated this into his own performances. This culminated in another significant recording, the *Gardens of Harlem* project he was able to realize with a 26 piece orchestra for the independent Jazz Composers of American label.

### **Horace Tapscott**

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<sup>82</sup> Liner notes on Thornton, Clifford. *The Panther and the Lash*. Universal Music S.A.S. France, 2004.

<sup>83</sup> "France Bars Thornton as Panther 'Suspect'". *Down Beat*, 29 April 1971.

One of the most unusual Black Panther-related musical ventures was Horace Tapscott's stewardship of Elaine Brown's 1969 album of original material, *Seize the Time!* According to Tapscott's autobiography, Stanley Crouch, then a young Black Arts poet and free jazz drummer, introduced Brown to him as a singer-songwriter whom the bandleader would appreciate.<sup>84</sup> Though *Songs of the Unsung* claims, dubiously, that Brown was not yet a Panther when they met, by 1969 when they worked on the album, she was a prominent member of the Los Angeles BPP chapter. According to Brown, Tapscott not only arranged and orchestrated the material, gathered and rehearsed the band (composed mostly of Pan-Afrikan People's Arkestra members), but "orchestrated the arrangements with Vault Records to have the album made."<sup>85</sup>

Tapscott would also be the musical director for Brown's eponymous 1972 album. These recordings do not constitute any particular great moment in jazz, and in fact would be mislabeled if called jazz, as they are dominated by the vocals and "unembellished piano-playing" of the BPP Secretary of Information.<sup>86</sup> Her songs are direct, exhortatory, and valorize the need for armed struggle on the part of African Americans. The most successful performance may be the first album's title tune. Though Brown is a vocalist of limited range, what she had going for her was earnestness, attitude, and a message of liberation that placed the onus of revolutionary action squarely on the listener: "you've never fought for the liberty that you claim to

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<sup>84</sup> Tapscott, Horace. *Songs of the Unsung*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001. Pages 112-13.

<sup>85</sup> Elaine Brown. *A Taste of Power*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1992. Page 195.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

lack.” despite the knowledge that the present government has “snatched the sun from all around you.” and taken “your souls and your lives.”

The piece has urgency, but the orchestration and band performance must give the performance all its color and dynamics, which Tapscott achieves with the horns call and response figures and dramatic harmonizing. Though in some eyes the albums are viewed as comically unsuccessful art, the truth is that it spoke to a constituency attuned to the desire for radical black collective action and cultural regeneration, and, because of the contribution of Tapscott and the Arkestra members, endures as an important statement of the era. They are a defining aspect of the contributions of Tapscott, a towering figure whose cultural and community concerns drew much admiration from his musical peers.

The Pan-Afrikan Peoples Arkestra had a strong presence in Los Angeles during the 1960s and 1970s, giving free concerts in the park, offering classes, and supporting other artists.<sup>87</sup> The UGMA house was a site of community organizing and a meeting place for activists, and drew police scrutiny, and incursions, as a result.<sup>88</sup> His commitment to community development more (at the expense of, even) than an established career in professional entertainment, coupled with his distrust of the jazz industry, meant that he had little interest in making recordings. (“Records and all, I didn’t even think about it.”<sup>89</sup>) Therefore, much of the Arkestra’s work exists only in memory. Tapscott writes of Arkestra material with poetry and lyrics that directly

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<sup>87</sup> Tapscott, 108.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

confronted racism and the need for organized resistance<sup>90</sup>, but most of this music has not been preserved. Outside of the Brown records, Tapscott's only date from this period was the 1969 Flying Dutchman LP *The Giant Is Awakened*, wherein a quartet featuring Arthur Blythe blows fierce renditions of Tapscott original instrumentals. (The title tune was written to portray "this sleeping black giant, somewhere, finally waking up and taking care of business and freeing his people." Tapscott remembered that the tune often caused audience members to stand up and salute.<sup>91</sup>) The autobiography asserts that he and his band participated in many events sponsored by the BPP and the Maulana Karenga's US organization, even going so far as to say that the Arkestra's performances stopped shooting wars between these two groups.<sup>92</sup>

### **Billy Gault**

An artist who cannot be considered a major figure in jazz but nonetheless produced an important, even anthemic, 1970s jazz LP was pianist Billy Gault, whose 1974 Steeplechase recording *When Destiny Calls* showcased his compositions. An adherent of Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam, William X. Gault's singular recording was facilitated by his association with Jackie McLean. Except the singers and saxophonist Bill Saxton, all the players (Billy Skinner, trumpet; James "Fish" Benjamin, bass, Thabo Michael Carvin, drums) on *Destiny* were member of McLean's Cosmic Brotherhood band. McLean recorded the *Antiquity* LP as a duo with Carvin for Steeplechase the following day, October 30, and the Cosmic Brotherhood's only

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 118

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 113-114.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 123.

recording may have been done on the 30<sup>th</sup> also. Four of the six tunes on *Destiny* feature lyrics sung by Ellen Deleston and Joe Lee Wilson.

As Gault states in the liner notes, the two instrumentals, "Portrait of Joaner" and "Aisha," are tributes to black womanhood. The least distinguished of the vocal numbers is his tribute to Muhammad, "Nothing But A Man." The other three pieces are all in full prophetic voice, and endure as statements of optimism, struggle against negative forces temporal and spiritual, and belief in the beauty of black culture. "Mode for Trane," later recorded by Wilson for his *Secrets of the Sun* LP, one of the more memorable Coltrane tributes, echoes themes found in the work of Black Arts poets, and is consistent with the musical community's veneration of the fallen visionary – his music as a sentinel of seriousness and a source of regeneration:

Who was this man who brought new sounds  
To pave the way to freedom and wake up our minds...  
Hearken to the message of Coltrane.

The song speaks to universal themes, rather than overtly black nationalist ones:

The universe this is our home  
If you follow him you might reclaim your own...  
A sound of truth and love/there hasn't been one since  
This is a tribute to a fallen prince.

The arrangements and soloists are not especially adventurous or fiery on the album, a quality that therefore calls attention to the composition and the lyric. The title tune has Deleston singing solo, and is a pretty melody that emphasizes upward striving toward full human potential: "reaching for the stars free as the sun am I... I'm moving on to reach my destiny and shine among the stars." Only the leader solos, while the horns continue to play the melody line.

Perhaps the most striking number from this project is the apocalyptic “The Time of This World is at Hand.” The first verse sung in duet by Wilson and Deleston, reads:

Let the trumpet sound throughout the land  
For this evil world, it will not stand  
For the truth has struck a blow  
You must choose the way that you will go  
For the time of this world is at hand.

Opening with an evocative image relating the idea of the music as a herald of change, as well as the Biblical image of Gabriel and the last days, the piece is in millennial mode from the start, condemning the rottenness of society, later on identifying confusion and war as prime elements of this evil. As the verses unfold, Gault’s message comes clear as the song begins to preach explicit Nation of Islam dogma, with lines like “love of self and love of kind/is just what we need to free our mind” and “what we need is a man who can understand that what our people really need is some land.” This will be the only time Gault lapses into doctrinal discourse on the LP. It gives an otherwise more generally religious sentiment “it is the time of the great separation” a more specific political import.

A bouncy appealing melody with lyrics that fit very well rhythmically, “The Time of This World” was used as the opening track of the record. Although the NOI produced the Louis X recording of “A White Man’s Heaven is a Black Man’s Hell” in the late 1950s or early 1960s and it was prominently played in their establishments, the organization, like many religious formations, did not embrace music as an important endeavor. Jazz certainly fell into that vast world of corruptible popular culture that was to be shunned. This attitude is illustrated in Malcolm X’s last recorded speech, when he noted that “when it came to serious things, the Negro was not there.” (This is the same

Malcolm in whose autobiography the royalty, character, and excitement of such figures as Billie Holiday and Count Basie are extolled.)<sup>93</sup> Gault's only other appearance on record is on the aforementioned Cosmic Brotherhood LP; McLean had earlier recorded his "Ode to Super" as the title tune for his 1973 Steeplechase LP.

### **Gary Bartz, Ntu Troop, and *Harlem Bush Music***

One of the definitive statements of the Black Arts program in jazz was *Harlem Bush Music*, recorded by Gary Bartz Ntu Troop in November 1970. In its consistent and explicit themes of resistance to white supremacy, the urgency of collective action, veneration of the looming icons John Coltrane and Malcolm X, and its honoring of the black past, this project encapsulated most of the major tropes of the cultural nationalist agenda. Conceived of and recorded by Bartz as a double album, *Harlem Bush Music* would ultimately be released by Milestone Records in 1971 as two single LPs, much to his consternation. As Maxine Bartz (then wife of the saxophonist) wrote in the liner notes, "this music is intended to reflect the tradition, history and condition of the Africans in Harlem – not just New York's Harlem, but the Harlems of the world."<sup>94</sup>

It is the most complete statement of the Ntu Troop, though this band would have a number of highlights. Bartz conceived of Ntu Troop in 1969, as a particular aspect of his musical project, one that was addressed specifically to people of African descent with a message of cultural renewal and struggle against injustice.<sup>95</sup> His conception of Ntu was fluid but centered on the idea of Africanness: he once said, "If I had to offer a

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<sup>93</sup> Malcolm X. "After the Bombing." In Breitman, George, ed. *Malcolm X Speaks*. New York: Grove Press, 1965. Page 169.

<sup>94</sup> Liner notes on Gary Bartz Ntu Troop. *Harlem Bush Music – Taifa / Harlem Bush Music – Uhuru*. Ace Records Ltd., 1997.

definition it would be the unity of things African.”<sup>96</sup> The first appearance of the name was on Bartz’s third Milestone LP, *Home!*, recorded in March 1969 at a Left Bank Jazz Society concert in Baltimore, his hometown. This incarnation of the band featured Albert Dailey, Woody Shaw, Bob Cunningham, and Rashied Ali. At this point Ntu Troop performances were all instrumental. The tune “Rise” was the band’s theme song; later, for *Harlem Bush Music*, Bartz would add lyrics calling for black nation-building to the insistent brooding melody. Another tune from *Home!*, “B.A.M.,” was dedicated to a local Baltimore organization, the Black Arts Media. According to a review of the concert, the band was dressed largely in dashikis, and Bartz had an array of small percussion and lit incense: “at times it looks as if the group is performing a service rather than a concert.”<sup>97</sup> This parenthetical insert by the author actually hits on a critical dimension of Bartz’s and Black Arts performance practice, as artists were indeed endeavoring to effect an atmosphere of mutual spiritual growth through art.

Bartz had signed a five album contract with Milestone, and had last done a studio date in June 1968, for the LP *Another Earth*. Over two years separated this date from the next studio appearance, the November 1970 session that produced *Harlem Bush Music*. Bartz stated that he underwent a crisis of purpose just before this, wondering if he was accomplishing anything worthwhile. “I felt like one thing black people did not need was another musician,” he said about this period. Talking it through with Max Roach, with whom he worked regularly in the late 1960s, helped the saxophonist to “realize that my music can teach, it can do lots of things. So I said maybe

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<sup>95</sup> Bartz, Gary. Telephone interview, 28 September 2000.

<sup>96</sup> Nolan, Herb. “Gary Bartz: Music is My Religion.” *Down Beat*, 21 June 1973, 15.

it might not be a bad idea to develop it along these lines, use it for more than entertaining.”<sup>98</sup>

By this point the personnel of Ntu Troop had changed considerably. The earlier group had been called together for the Left Bank gig, and did not work together enough to remain together. The new crew was a piano-less band, consisting of bassist Juni Booth, drummer Harold White, percussionist Nat Bettis, and vocalist Andy Bey, with Bartz on sax and vocals as well. “Along the way, I found a need to communicate a little more with an audience, that’s why I started writing lyrics,” he said in 1973.<sup>99</sup>

Of the seven selections on *Taifa*, the first installment of *HBM*, all but the last two feature the vocals of Bey; the last two have recitations of words of important figures by Bartz. The LP opens with the aforementioned “Rise,” and proceeds to “People Dance,” an extended number that expresses its title both through its lyrics and its incorporation of dance rhythms. Side Two begins with the opus “Drinking Song,” which opens with the admonition “Free your mind while there’s time,” and whose message is encapsulated by these lines: “never be a revolution/drinking drinking wine.” “Taifa,” the title song, means nation in Swahili, and is the name of the Bartzes’ daughter. The only lyrics in this lullaby are also in Swahili: “taifa idimu milele,” loosely translatable as “long live the nation.”

Next is Bartz’s treatment of Paul Laurence Dunbar’s antislavery lament, “Parted.” Through overdubbing Bartz, the sole performer on this number, adds vocal chorus and saxophone harmonies to a fairly straight reading of the poem, in which a

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<sup>97</sup> “Scene and Heard: Gary Bartz.” *Down Beat*, 4 September 1969, 29.

<sup>98</sup> Nolan, 14.

man being sold away from his wife makes a forlorn promise to one day see her again. This direct discussion of America's slave past is quite unusual in jazz; renditions of Negro spirituals reference it, and "Driva' Man" and "Freedom Day" from Roach's *Freedom Now Suite* dealt with it directly also, but "Parted" stands out as a rare achievement. In addition to calling our attention to that evil and foundational historical experience of the United States, it also acknowledges the black creative past in presenting the work of Dunbar, that once-venerated Negro poet and writer. The album closes with "The Warrior's Song," a torrid instrumental of fierce trio blowing that breaks in the middle for Bartz reading a quote from Malcolm X heralding the rise of a new generation of fearless confident black activists, then reciting Coltrane's famous "I want to be a force for good" passage.

The second installment of *HBM, Uhuru*, adds to *Taifa* most notably, perhaps, for its two antiwar songs, "Uhuru Sasa" and Hakim Jami's "Vietcong." Bartz's "Uhuru Sasa" takes the Kenyan liberation movement slogan and adapts it to the African American predicament. "Hell no, I won't fight your filthy battles no more, 'cause I got some battles of my own to fight for," the lyrics begin, clearly referencing though never mentioning by name resistance to the US military draft and the war in Vietnam. The second verse nods to black women's historical role in the US economy as domestic workers, declaring "I won't raise your children and you no more." These are essentially the only lines of the piece, as the bass-drums-congas rhythm section sets up a powerful groove over which Bey and Bartz improvise with words and alto horn. The high point may be reached when Bey is repeatedly shouting "Hell no" and Bartz echoes his

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 15.

impassioned cries on alto. The bluesy “Vietcong” follows immediately, broadening the discussion of resistance to US power:

Little old man walking through the jungle, the Vietcong  
little old man brave and fearless warrior, the Vietcong  
twenty years of fighting for his homeland, the Vietcong  
he won't give up the rights of home for no man, the Vietcong  
why don't all you foreigners leave them folks alone  
pack up all yr guns, go home where you belong.

Much of the antiwar protest and commentary in the U.S. tended to emphasize the contradictions of American foreign policy and the numbers of US casualties, but “Vietcong” takes another approach, identifying with the justness and heroism of the struggle of the Vietnamese against foreign domination. These explicit antiwar pieces extend a conversation that involved Leon Thomas, who recorded his blues “Damn Nam” for his debut album *Spirits Known and Unknown* in October 1969. “Damn Nam” declared forthrightly:

You can call me crazy, but I ain't going to Vietnam,  
'cause it's a dirty mean war, and nobody seems to give a damn.

Thomas' song emphasized the contradiction of fighting in a foreign land (as well as other profligate ventures like the moon missions) when various ills and injustices were rampant in the United States, the impersonality of killing enemy combatants from great distances, and his willingness to suffer scorn and imprisonment for draft resistance.

*Harlem Bush Music* marked the end of Bartz's association with Milestone; according to producer Orrin Keepnews, it was by mutual decision, and negligible sales were a factor for both parties.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Liner notes on: Gary Bartz Ntu Troop. *Juju Street Songs*. Prestige Records, 1997.

Although *Harlem Bush Music* was definitive, it is possible that the pinnacle of achievement for Ntu Troop was the song “I’ve Known Rivers,” Bartz’s adaptation of Langston Hughes’ first published poem, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers.” This performance reflected the saxophonist’s ongoing interest in incorporating classic black poetry into musical presentation. Ironically this masterpiece of black consciousness was recorded in Switzerland, at the Montreux Jazz Festival, in July 1973. Featuring a bright melody, a cooking band, and an extraordinarily lyrical saxophone solo, “Rivers” also had Bartz now as the band’s lone singer. Though he was certainly no replacement for Bey, he gets the job done here with humility and panache. Although Hughes’ legacy was immense, subsequent radio play of this performance exposed some listeners to the Negro poet laureate and the black literary tradition. Although I discuss Bartz here primarily in terms of his political thrust, it is important to acknowledge his larger agenda of cultural awareness and regeneration. “I’ve Known Rivers” is exemplary in this regard.

## **BLACKNUSS**

In this section I will consider work by Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Eddie Gale, Sonny Sharrock, and Jackie McLean that put forward explicit articulations of African American racial/cultural identity. This was a particular theme of the Black Arts movement, and can also be seen at different points in jazz history, particularly in the work of Duke Ellington. Oliver Nelson's *Afro-American Sketches* from 1961, a musical portrait of historical phases of black experience in the U.S., followed a jazz tradition works such as Ellington's *Black, Brown and Beige* and *Jump for Joy* had established. In the Black Arts era, too, the impulse to render specific visions of African American

identity continued, and reflected some of the new ways that African Americans saw themselves and "their" culture in the decade after 1965.

### **Rahsaan Roland Kirk**

It will be instructive to begin this discussion with the song "Blacknuss," the title tune from Rahsaan Roland Kirk's album recorded in August 1971. Considered one of the more outspoken jazz musicians on the subject of racial stratification and black genius, Rahsaan in 1971 offered up a song that had multiple agendas: one part send-up of the cult of blackness, one part celebration of black vernacular and culinary folkways, and one part musical experiment. He wrote the tune strictly on the black notes of the piano, something of a musical challenge, but also an obvious and ironic signification on the idea of blackness. The melody is introduced on the kalimba, or African thumb piano, which had entered African American music recently through figures such as Leon Thomas and Maurice White as a sign of Africa and its musical traditions. Rahsaan then offers a brief faux-sermon (elsewhere on the album he performs "Old Rugged Cross" and delivers a more extended and witty one) that is worth quoting:

Now we are gathered here on the universe at this time, this particular time, to listen to the 36 black notes of the piano. There's 36 black notes and 52 white notes. We don't mean to eliminate nothin', but we're going to just hear the black notes at this time, if you don't mind. Blacknuss – B-L-A-C-K-N-U-S-S.

The choice to spell the word with an idiosyncratic "u" instead of an "e" is a destabilizing gesture, suggesting that the discourse of black identity was subject to critique, or perhaps revision.

Rahsaan proceeds to talk-sing the melody, reciting “b-l-a-c-k-n-u-s-s.” with band members singing behind him, then he plays the line on tenor. After a couple of choruses, Rahsaan shouts “Black Black Black!” and the band ratchets up the tempo to an almost frenetic pace. Over this high energy groove Rahsaan begins to declaim, proudly and enthusiastically, various wonderful qualities or aspects of this blacknuss. Some of what he shouts is unintelligible, but among the delights are blackberries, “that chicken, that good chicken.” “that smothered steak.” sweet potatoes, and, most interestingly “Oh, black thighs.” This last is a not atypical sexual reference by Rahsaan, but is most notable for being a quote from the Last Poets, whose 1970 debut LP features the poem titled “Black Thighs.”

“Blacknuss” can be read as both celebration and satire. It probably does continue the objectification of black women with the black thighs reference, but is also engaging a radical voice of black rebellion, since the Last Poets LP is the same one that produced the classic screed *Niggers Are Scared of Revolution*. Rahsaan’s focus on soul food and sex relates to everyday pleasures, but the African cultural legacy is also figured with the prominence of the kalimba. The blackberries reference suggests frivolity, and Rahsaan’s overall jocular demeanor lends a tongue-in-cheek quality to the performance. There were numerous statements of racial identity explicit and implicit in Kirk’s work throughout his mature career, but “Blacknuss” remains one of the most multivalent. His interpolation of “We Shall Overcome” on three horns at the end of “Three for the Festival,” captured at the 1968 Newport Jazz Festival, illustrates Rahsaan’s insurgent qualities. It comes after the section where Rahsaan solos on flute while simultaneously talking, the words somewhat obscured but expressive of passion and anger. Many of

Kirk's monologues, poems such as "Clickety Clack," liner notes he began to contribute later in his Atlantic contract, and songs such as "Black Mystery Has Been Revealed" marked him as an artist continually concerned with issues of race, access, and identity.

### Eddie Gale

Another important attempt to explicitly express this blacknuss idea was trumpeter Eddie Gale's 1968 LP *Ghetto Music*, as well as the 1969 follow-up *Black Rhythm Happening*, also on Blue Note. Gale, whose background included work with Sun Ra, Cecil Taylor, Larry Young, and Jackie McLean, stated that Coltrane wanted him for the *Ascension* date, but he was unfortunately unavailable. The *Ghetto Music* concept was theatrical as well as musical, and in live performances there were "costumes, acting, and dramatic presentation."<sup>101</sup> Women dressed in white, hooded full length garbs, while the men wore pants and hooded tops that appear to be red or blue. On the album, there is no title tune: the totality of the expression is ghetto music. According to Gale, producer Francis Wolff, who became attracted to Gale's music through a Blue Note date the trumpeter had with Cecil Taylor, was quite intrigued by the resonances of the ghetto music concept with his own Jewish heritage. For Gale, the concept was both specifically African American and universal:

It's not strictly rhythm and blues and it's not strictly jazz and it's not strictly folk music, so people are sometimes confused by what I mean when I use the term ghetto to describe what I'm doing... As a black artist from a ghetto (in the usual sense of the word) ... I'm using that term to describe my music because along with expressing my experience of Bedford-Stuyvesant where I was born, I want to express my experience of living in the *whole* world as well.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Liner notes on: Gale, Eddie. *Ghetto Music*. Blue Note Records, 1968.

<sup>102</sup> Levin, Robert. "The Third World." *Jazz & Pop* (May 1970): 12.

(In 1971 the band War would release the album and song *The World is a Ghetto*, perhaps mirroring this sentiment.)

*Ghetto Music* opens with “Stop the Rain,” the only tune on the LP with lyrics, and the only one not written by Gale. His sister, Joann Gale, was writer, guitarist, and lead vocalist on this song, ostensibly about the parting of lovers:

when the rain begins to fall/ I must leave you, so long  
though I go I want you to know/though I leave you I'll not deceive you  
wipe the tears away from your eyes/stop the rain.

The tune features an interesting contrast in textures and feel between the verses sung by Miss Gale with her guitar, then repeated by the chorus with the band boring in full. The two basses and drummers turn it into an anthemic, propulsive piece that extends the meaning beyond romantic separation. When the Noble Gale Singers shout the verse's final line “Stop the Rain,” the allusion to the African American predicament seems unavoidable.

“Fulton Street,” the next number, celebrates the vibrant culture of Bedford-Stuyvesant, with the voices adding only the refrain at the beginning and end of the tune: “Fulton Street, Baby!” In between, the song consists solely of fierce solos from trumpet and tenor. Elsewhere, martial rhythms undergird the performance of “A Walk With Thee.” The Singers wordlessly intone the minor key melody along with the horns, projecting a sense of collective action and urgency, reflecting and commenting on the intensity of the instrumental performances collectively and individually.

The final cut, “The Coming of Gwilu,” opens with forest figurations, Gale on recorder and then thumb piano, followed by real flute. Drums and then bass come in

setting up a six note vamp over which a wash of rhythms coalesce. Elaine Beiner leads the singers in a call and response, as they repeat each of her wordless lines. Her choice of syllables and sonorities seem iconoclastic, evocative of some other time and/or place, a tribal identity and expression, a desire for linkages with imagined African ancestors. The song celebrates the birth of the trumpeter's son, the ritual of renewal, the communal celebration of new life.

So *Ghetto Music* takes the listener on a journey from the Brooklyn to African roots, a statement about blackness very much in tune with the zeitgeist of the late 1960s. Gale was afforded one more opportunity to record for Blue Note eight months later in May 1969. (This would be his last recording until the late 1980s; according to Gale, Wolff's ability to sign/resign acts was compromised by United Artists, the conglomerate that bought the label in 1967, and conflicts between Gale and UA people led to the non-renewal of a contract that he and Wolff wanted to continue.<sup>103</sup> *Black Rhythm Happening* continued with much the same approach, incorporating shorter tunes and the talents of guests such as Elvin Jones, Jimmy Lyons, and Roland Alexander. The first album, though not appearing on any charts, must have done well enough to have the company market the second in similar manner. *Jazz and Pop* critic Robert Levin, generally quite sympathetic to the new music, viewed *Black Rhythm Happening* as a crass capitulation to market forces.<sup>104</sup> Marketing might seem to have a role in the titling if not conception of two of the cuts, "Ghetto Love Night" and "Ghetto Summertime." In any case, neither of these records would last long in the Blue Note catalog, nor be part of any of their

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<sup>103</sup> Bendel, Joseph. "Black Rhythm Happening." *Signal to Noise* (Spring 2001): 26.

<sup>104</sup> Levin, 12.

copious CD reissues. (In 2003 two small San Francisco based companies reissued them.)

### **Sonny Sharrock**

One of the more challenging and unique works of this era is the *Black Woman* LP by guitarist Sonny Sharrock, with a band featuring drummer Milford Graves, pianist Dave Burrell, bass work by Sirone and Richard Pierce, Ted Daniel on trumpet, and the vocals of Linda Sharrock. Recorded In October 1968, the album was released the next year on the Atlantic subsidiary Vortex, run by Herbie Mann, an enduringly popular and successful jazz performer who had added the guitarist to his band earlier that year.

*Black Woman* was the recording debut of Linda Sharrock, and presented an uncompromising and avant garde conception of jazz vocals, as well as the interaction between band and vocalist. In the choice of song titles, it offered a probing, possibly subversive take on the question of black identity. The title tune opens the LP, Linda repeating a simple figure with the guitar following her. With the second chorus Graves begins to layer the duet with rhythm, and Linda raises the intensity. Her wordless singing becomes more of a moan, hitting lower notes, beginning to spin out of the line into wails, commented on and returned by the guitarist's increasingly furious strumming. Linda is equal to the mounting intensity of the band, raising pitch, using harmonics, well placed and completely controlled screams. She absorbs the buffeting of Graves' bombs and throbbings and maintains this testimony of triumph and pain. It is a sound that references cries of pain, and hence could evoke any number of aspects or episodes of the African American experience. It also is a striking feat of imagination, to take the voice and apply it to the saxophone language of Ayler, Sanders, and Coltrane.

In particular, the vocalist employs the method of presenting a simple short phrase, repeating it while shifting it through various alterations, and thereby teasing out new melodic meanings and comments. The vocalist also communicates a joy of discovery, the finding of harmony in the improvising band, and the sense of triumph in making a genuine personal and collective statement.

A point of comparison sometimes made with Linda Sharrock's work is "Tryptich: Prayer/Protest/Peace," sung by Abbey Lincoln on Max Roach's 1960 *We Insist: The Freedom Now Suite*. Sharrock never heard the song, as it turns out, and Sonny Sharrock once disputed the comparison anyway: "what [Lincoln] did was cry and moan. But Linda is singing. It's a musical thing."<sup>105</sup> (Lincoln would essentially disavow this performance as not her conception in later years; elsewhere here see a discussion of her 1973 LP *People in Me*.)

"Portrait of Linda in Three Colors, All Black" is the last of *Black Woman*'s five selections, and offers another definitive statement of the couple's radical aesthetic. Even more than "Black Woman," this performance enters territory of sustained emotional extremity, with the vocalist, this time on a far more up-tempo tune, uttering yelps, moans, and shrieks while the band supports her explorations with dense textures. In the course of a tour-de-force solo, the vocalist displays the ability to quickly modulate from the most impassioned displays of fervor to a projection of innocent hopefulness. Focusing mostly on the intensity, a reviewer wrote that she "evinces pain, trills like a maddened bird, chants, screams with broken voice, evoking goose pimples, fear, terror,

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<sup>105</sup> Bourne, Mike. "Sonny Sharrock's Story," *Down Beat*, 11 June 1970, 17.

compassion and antagonism in the sympathetic listener.”<sup>106</sup> Once again, though it is clear that each pitch, each extension beyond her range into textured harmonics is willful, and part of the desired collective sound. The *Black Woman* LP engages the discourse of the Black Arts in a number of ways. Though, lacking lyrics, it is not at all didactic; its concern with identity, allusions to history, and its radical soundscape force a confrontation with the pain and difficulty of existence, and offer a vision of the strength necessary to continue it.

### **‘Bout Soul**

Jackie McLean, an established hard bop player who in the 1960s showed increasing affinity for the younger generation’s freer sound, is an important figure in this time period. Although he would sharply reduce his recording and playing after 1968 to devote time to building the Artist Collective, his last Blue Note LPs, especially the 1967 *Bout Soul*, are noteworthy in this Black Arts jazz discussion. Although mostly free improvisations, the LP opens with “Soul,” a Barbara Simmons poem orchestrated by the band, with music written by Grachan Moncur III. “Soul” is but one example of jazz artists in this period turning to the spoken word as a pronounced element in their work. Of course, there were many such collaborations in the 1950s, and figures such as Charles Mingus succeeded in crafting compelling statements. “Soul,” in fact, bears some similarity to the Mingus-Langston Hughes collaboration “Scenes in the City,” originally recorded in 1957. Moncur’s music moves through bluesy riffs and displays of intensity corresponding to the poet’s shifting moods and imagery.

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<sup>106</sup> Review of *Black Woman*. *Down Beat*, 14 May 1970.

The recording of "Soul" came about when Simmons, inspired by the saxophonist's performances, wrote the poem as a tribute, subsequently meeting McLean and reciting her poem for him. He decided to set it to music and document the results. Simmons' poem is a meditation on the various meanings of soul, which had become a dominant term for black culture and cultural expression, whereas "Scenes" was exactly that, the travails of a working class man in a Harlem rooming house. Each, though never mentioning race, are squarely rooted in an urban black sensibility. "Soul" opens up asking if in fact its subject is a definable thing. Soul might be many things: is it the quasi-religious concept, the "elastic man who lives in an invisible shell and drifts to heaven or hell" when one dies? Perhaps soul is the music, the saxes/trumpets/trombones that wail and announce that "there's gonna be, gotta be an explosion!" McLean then unleashes a torrent of impassioned testimony on alto. Soul is also the physical rhythms of (black) dance, body movement, laughter, honesty, and earthiness. Ultimately it is bigger than attempts to define it.

Later on we see what soul is not, as an ostentatious wealthy couple visit a South Sea island and purchase exotic ersatz native experiences, never appreciating the real folk culture: "no soul, no soul." The penultimate line of the poem tells us that soul is "the heart cut out of a watermelon and screaming 'I want to vote!' while the vein of its country chokes its breath off." The poet tells us that if you don't understand soul, you never will, and McLean closes the number with somber soloing. McLean's decision to build his LP around this poem is evidence of his embrace of the sensibility which produced it, the jazz/poetry connection, the desire for social relevance, the commitment to articulating the black experience, as well as one's full humanity, and to point out the

corruption of the dominant society. Although blackness per se is not specifically named, it is the clear subject of this performance.

### **BLACK SPIRITUALITY**

Historically in U.S. art, the image of Negro religiosity has been a common trope in United States culture. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century this image of the African American in postures of devoutness was used in literature, on the stage, and in public rhetoric by whites in at least two distinct ways: as a testament to the black person's loyalty, reverence, innocence, and thus humanity, deserving of more humane treatment; and as a nostalgic rebuke of post-slavery Negro assertiveness, by positing a religious, humble, acquiescent black man and woman of yore, the "good Negro." Blacks also latched onto this image of the religious Negro in song, seeing the beauty of that song as evidence of black creativity and thus humanity. Dunbar's poem *When Malindy Sings* (1896) uses this image to somewhat invert the plantation school stereotype, advancing the notion that this black musical genius as expressed in religious song proved the superiority of the black musical tradition over European music. The poem also talked about black religious song as a force of nature, close to God and capable of drawing a human closer to it. Certainly its singers were humble creatures, seconding the idea of the special elevated character of the Negroes of de olden times.

To a considerable degree, the salience of the image of the Negro religious song was impacted by the work of the Fisk Jubilee Singers in popularizing the Negro spiritual in the 1870s. Their success plus song collectors' and folklorists' penchant for documenting religious songs somewhat at the expense of secular material, helped to shape a popular conception of the enslaved community as uniformly Christian, explains

the overwhelming predominance of religious material in the body of collected black song. For entertainers of different racial groups, then, the black religious song was a powerful image, inherently nostalgic. Black stage performers and “serious” composers used the spirituals as definitive emblems of Negroess throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The spirituals were the centerpiece of the Harlem Renaissance era project to justify Negro citizenship through artistic achievement. For W.E.B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, and Alain Locke, it was the spirituals that were the Negro’s highest creation and contribution to world culture, and it was this material which awaited the touch of some properly trained black compositional genius to turn it into truly great art. Neither gospel, blues, nor jazz was a part of this argument.<sup>107</sup>

Jazz (and blues) were seen as antithetical to the Christian tradition, but in the 1950s the soul jazz movement prominently used the figure of black churchgoing, as well as gospel motifs, to signify black identity. Tunes such as Horace Silver’s “Sister Sadie”, “The Preacher,” and Mingus’ “Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting” are examples of this trend. In fact, the designation of this music as soul is itself a reference to a specifically black religiosity.

This image is generally female. It is no accident that Dunbar’s poem is about when *Malindy* sings. The first great gospel singers were female, and though the male quartets were dominant in the 1930s and 40s, women have been in the forefront of church singing generally.

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<sup>107</sup> Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Boston: Bedford Books, 1997. And Johnson, James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson. *The Books of Negro Spirituals* (Two volumes in one). New York: Da Capo Books, 1985. And Locke, Alain. “The Negro Spirituals.” In Locke, Alain, ed. *The New Negro*. New York: Atheneum, 1992.

The theme I am coining as black spirituality in the Black Arts era in jazz partakes of this longstanding trope of the black religious song, but suggests other possibilities and cultural meanings and references for this image as well. Some pieces loosen this image from its Christian moorings, suggesting alternate sources for wisdom and ecstasy from the East. The ecstatic is embraced and expressed, which is a break from respectable displays of black religious song embraced by the intelligentsia. And this spirituality often merges quite fully with political worldly concerns, particularly the movement for black human rights. This section focuses on the use of the female-dominated vocal chorus, and the work of Doug and Jean Carn, Nina Simone, and Pharoah Sanders as avatars of this modern black spirituality made manifest in sound, imagery, and lyrical substance.

It is useful here to examine Donald Byrd's 1963 LP *A New Perspective*, an important and popular (enduringly so) statement which employed lyrical jazz with Hall Johnson's vocal chorus, to evoke a longstanding image of African American religiosity. Duke Pearson's "Christo Redentor" was the radio and jukebox hit, but additional numbers with a similar conception, especially "Beast of Burden," also alluded to major themes in Negro history. This LP is an appropriate emblem of an early 1960s conservative jazz Negro sensibility, merging accepted traditions of musical and cultural discourse. Though rooted in what would soon be called black pride, it posed no real challenge to the social and/or aesthetic frameworks of most listeners. The later period will witness several notable attempts to capture black spirituality in different ways, and the vocal chorus will remain a prominent part of such efforts. *A New Perspective* takes

on this Negro religiosity, not with down-home references, but in the elevated discourse of the concert spiritual.

With an eight voice chorus directed by Coleridge Perkinson and arrangements by Duke Pearson, the septet performs material that is not funky but lyrical and solemn. Perkinson, an accomplished composer and conductor in the world of art music, had done jazz vocal arranging, most notably for Max Roach's 1962 Impulse! LP *It's Time*.<sup>108</sup> As he stated in the LP's liner notes, "the music in this album is basically akin to the spirituals rather than to the later rocking gospel style."<sup>109</sup> Indeed, the opening number "Elijah" invokes "Wade in the Water" as melodic and structural source, while the next cut, "Beast of Burden," relaxed and bluesy, has a title which unavoidably connotes the crucible out of which the spiritual developed, American racial chattel slavery.<sup>110</sup> The album's best known songs, "Christo Redentor" and "Chant," were written by Duke Pearson. "Redentor" became one of the enduring successes of the label, released as a 45 and garnering much broadcast and jukebox (and later as television soundtracks, for ads and documentaries about New York prostitutes) exposure.<sup>111</sup>

There is a perhaps understated pan-Africanism at work in this recording, as Nat Hentoff hints at in the notes. "Redentor" was inspired by Pearson's visit to Rio de

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<sup>108</sup> Richard Cook asserts that *A New Perspective* was a follow-up to *It's Time*, though he doesn't elaborate. The albums are linked by virtue of being small jazz ensembles augmented by Perkinson-directed vocal ensembles, but generally speaking have very different feels, Roach going for a far more secular sensibility than Byrd. In addition, the militant overtones of the title tune at least provide an oppositional edge that would be hard to claim for the equally realized *Perspective*.

<sup>109</sup> Liner notes on: Byrd, Donald. *A New Perspective*. Blue Note Records, 1963.

<sup>110</sup> In the liner notes, Byrd states that the title comes from the "slow, shuffling type of beat that characterizes the piece."

<sup>111</sup> Owens, Brent. *Hookers at the Point* (Volumes One and Two). HBO Films, 1997.

Janeiro and beholding the famous giant Jesus statue, whereas Byrd's tune "The Black Disciple" looked to the rhythms of music from the Congo as source.<sup>112</sup> This portrait of Negro religiosity leans not in the direction of fervor but restraint, perhaps in keeping with Byrd's Methodist upbringing. He strove for a vocalized effect in his solos, and a strong quality of reverence imbued the LP, especially "Redentor." Claiming that he could not come up with adequate lyrics to bear the import of the compositions, Byrd chose to have the vocal chorus sing without words, which lent a certain stateliness to the music.<sup>113</sup> This important recording can be compared fruitfully with later jazz recordings that also make use of the female dominated chorus evoking the image of Negro religiosity.

In 1973 tenor saxophonist Billy Harper recorded and self-produced his debut album *Capra Black*, releasing it on the Strata East label. The first side of the LP was called *Capra*; the other side, wherein the two compositions feature a vocal chorus with the group, was *Black*. "Soulfully I Love You/Black Spiritual of Love" opens this side with a ballad, with the vocalists harmonizing wordlessly in support of the melody carried by the tenor. The tenorist states in the notes that the piece was meant to "simulate an anthem," and pianist George Cables' occasional gospel flourishes combine with the chorus' high ranging harmonies to suggest such a quality. Harper ensures that consumers of the recording are aware of his intent to reflect a vision of spirituality grounded in African American cultural experience, yet one that is not modeled on gospel. There is an earnestness of presentation that marks it as different from soul jazz

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<sup>112</sup> Liner notes on *A New Perspective*.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

grooves, and in its forthright declarations of black identity (Harper wrote all the notes), it is very much a creature of the early 1970s. The other tune on this side of the LP, “Cry of Hunger!” is also of a quasi-religious nature, though it has only one line of lyrics – “There’ll be enough someday” – as it cycles through sections of turbulence and release. According to Harper’s notes again, the hunger referred to has multiple dimensions, but “to be more explicit, the hunger that lives within ‘the struggle.’”<sup>114</sup> This direct linking of jazz’s spiritual questing to the movement for African American empowerment was commonplace in the music of this later period.

Another self-produced effort which takes on this dimension of black spirituality is the 1975 album *The Beginning of a New Birth* by the World’s Experience Orchestra. In both the title tune and the lone other tune on the LP, “The Prayer,” the eleven piece band lay down layered vamps while the seven strong vocal contingent wordlessly sing the chorus along with the horns. “The Prayer” features a simple six note melody sung by the vocalists, the horns underneath them, while the soloist emerges from the brew. The voices, mixed though dominated by women, continue to come in with this figure at intervals throughout the performance, heralding the advent of the next soloist. Each solo is quite brief, especially for this era of extended performances. The repetition of the form creates a meditative mood, and the combination of chorus and improvising horn simultaneously projects a sense of collective searching and identity. Those who were in possession of the LP had additional information to help appreciate the cultural intent of the artists. The cover is a collage of individual photographs of the ensemble, some engaged in performing, others merely smiling for the camera. The notes on the back

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<sup>114</sup> Liner notes on: Harper, Billy. *Capra Black*, Strata East Records, 1973.

announce its sponsorship by Brothers & Sisters Unlimited, an organization of Boston-based “underground” black artists and arts supporters.<sup>115</sup> Along with the many nonwestern names that the musicians bore, this information clearly signaled an alternative conception of spirituality, in accord with the Black Arts call for new modes of self-conception.

### Doug and Jean Carn

One of the defining acts in this thrust at asserting an overtly spiritual dimension of jazz of the Black Arts era was Doug Carn, who released three influential LPs featuring the vocals of Jean Carn on the Black Jazz label between 1971 and 1973. Doug Carn stated repeatedly that in writing lyrics for songs by Lee Morgan, Coltrane, and Wayne Shorter among others, he wanted to bring the compositions of contemporary jazz masters to greater visibility. He felt that

there is a revelation of certain prophetic dimensions inherent in this music...contain[ing] a vital message that most of the people were unaware of. Therefore, it became my personal challenge to bring more of this music to the surface where it could be understood and enjoyed by everyone and to counterbalance the myth that jazz was mostly about a party-time lifestyle.<sup>116</sup>

He also stated in a 1974 interview, “The reason why I employ lyrics is to get people to understand what I feel the music is all about.”<sup>117</sup>

For Carn, what the music was about was spiritual and cultural awakening. His secret weapon was his lead vocalist Jean Carn, whose rich and far-ranging voice was the signature sound of the early records. Carn proved himself to be an excellent arranger,

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<sup>115</sup> Liner notes on: The World’s Experience Orchestra. *The Beginning of a New Birth*. World Productions, 1975.

<sup>116</sup> Liner notes on reissue of Carn, Doug. *Infant Eyes*. Black Jazz Records, 1997.

for the blend of voice with band achieved a harmony and balance quite rare: as a reviewer noted, “the vocal lines were thoroughly integral parts of the arrangements, not just vocals with instrumental accompaniment.”<sup>118</sup> Ms. Carn was a new voice on the scene in 1971, a time when the corps of jazz singers was hardly getting replenished. In terms of an Afrocentric cultural projection, her immediate antecedents would appear to be Abbey Lincoln and Nina Simone, though Carn had a different musical sensibility. In a 1974 interview she spoke of the importance of getting across a message, expressing her admiration for Leon Thomas, but commenting that most jazz singers’ material “tends not to delve into the spiritual realm of music in the manner that Doug’s lyrics do.”<sup>119</sup> Her powerful voice coupled with a willingness and ability to tackle serious compositions made her a fresh presence in jazz. Although criticized by some, her achievement was generally acknowledged.

No small measure of her/their allure was the definite cultural stance the couple took, obvious not only in lyrics but in attire and associations. *Infant Eyes* (1971) was one of the first issues of the new Black Jazz record label. The cover was iconic: the Carns sit together outdoors on the ground, Jean holding their infant, all of them clad in Afros and flowing African or neo-African garb. Only the child looks into the camera, as the adults each fix their serene solemn gaze beyond. Each of the three albums featured her image prominently, and they were all billed as Doug Carn “featuring the voice of Jean Carn.” *Infant Eyes* contained one Carn original, “Moon Child,” one of only two

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<sup>117</sup> “Profile: Doug and Jean Carn.” *Down Beat*, 31 January 1974.

<sup>118</sup> Welding, Pete. “Caught in the Act: Doug Carn.” *Down Beat*, late 1971 or early 1972. (From a clippings file at the Institute of Jazz Studies, Newark, NJ.)

<sup>119</sup> “Profile: Doug and Jean Carn.”

tunes on which the vocalist does not appear; the rest of the material was composed by Coltrane (2), Shorter, Bobby Hutcherson, McCoy Tyner, and Horace Silver. Subsequent releases would contain mostly Carn originals, and include usually two tunes by jazz masters, with added lyrics.

The couple broke up in 1974, and did not work together again thereafter. Doug Carn's subsequent Black Jazz LP, *Adam's Apple*, went in a different direction. Though still concerned with the uplift of black people, this record contained none of the lyrics-added jazz classics that were a defining characteristic of the other albums. The album bears a title tune that is of the same name as the title tune of a 1966 Wayne Shorter LP, but it's a different song entirely, one that delved into the Garden of Eden story in a credulous manner. Though this album is not without musical interest, it definitely illustrates that Jean Carn's vocals were an essential part of the classic Doug Carn sound, and that her absence seriously lessened the impact of his music.

Certainly the consistent theme of Carn's recordings was this representation of a progressive black spirituality. I will consider the *Infant Eyes* LP in some detail. Carn claims these contemporary jazz composers as part of a Black Arts movement in the same way as writers such as Baraka, Neal, and Toure did. Carn's lyricizing of Shorter et. al. claims them as progenitors of the new consciousness the movement was supposed to facilitate. Given that consciousness was what Black Arts movement was all about, and the primacy of the musical model and referent in the writing, Carn's output looms as an important object of study.

The *Infant Eyes* LP opens with a brief wordless version of Coltrane's "Welcome," one of his prettiest melodies. Jean impressively hits all her notes, letting

the listener from the start know that a vocalist of rare range is on the scene. (She would later reprise this version of “Welcome” in a more extended treatment for the 1974 Norman Connors LP *Slewfoot*.) Later they also do “Acknowledgment” from *A Love Supreme*, wherein they exhort the listener to monotheistic religious faith. The album closes with Jean singing her husband’s lyrics to Horace Silver’s “Peace;” unbeknownst to Doug Carn, the tune’s author had already crafted his own set of lyrics to the enduring ballad. Whereas Silver’s lyrics emphasize the importance and pursuit of individual mental and psychic tranquility, Carn typically focuses on the social aspects of this quality: “We need peace for our children, so that they may live a better life.” (In 1975, Lonnie Liston Smith recorded his own version of this popular song, with his brother Donald singing Carn’s lyric, an indication of the impact of the recording.)

The theme of parenthood and children is the frame through which Carn often communicates the spiritual and cultural values he wishes to project. On *Infant Eyes* this starts with the second cut, Bobby Hutcherson’s “Little B’s Poem.” Carn raises the tempo considerably from the vibraphonist’s original, which appeared on his 1965 Blue Note LP *Components*. Hutcherson had written the piece for his toddler son Barry; Carn’s tribute to his daughter includes the lines “before you came and brought us such joy/how we hoped and prayed that you’d be a boy/but little girl you are our hearts’ delight” as an acknowledgment. This celebration of a newborn daughter is collective, shared by both parents. A fairly unusual statement in jazz or pop, “Little B’s Poem” is a remarkable melody by the vibraphonist; the arrangement is bright and the vocalist communicates the joy of the lyric as she is right on top of the rhythm. To Hutcherson’s melody, Carn adds horns blending in different lines as an introduction, then has Jean

open with wordless scattling, up-tempo and joyous. In the verses, the singer grooves along with a swinging organ:

Horns of love, you make my heart sing  
Rejoice, rejoice, let all the bells ring  
For Little B, you are my heart's delight  
You make life sunny and bright,  
Little B, you are all my heart sings for.

There had been jazz celebrations of children – Randy Weston's *Little Niles* (1958) and Rahsaan Roland Kirk's *A Laugh for Rory* (1967) are examples – but this lyric gave the theme a spirit of nation-building. (An example closer to the time of the Carns' recording was the 1971 LP *Mother's Love Song*, by singer/songwriter Jo Grinage on the Dakeeta label. The cover photo featured herself, afro-coiffed of course, embracing a young girl presumably her daughter.) Family was a concept dominating the rhetoric of Black Power, with the woman's primary role considered to be as a mother. The *Infant Eyes* LP does make that a primary identity for Jean, though in subsequent records she would become more of an exhorter and would sing no more mother songs.

And then there is the title tune "Infant Eyes," a feature for Jean with light keyboard and bass accompaniment, with drummer Thabo Michael Carvin on cymbals and flutist George Harper adding colors. Jean's work displays remarkable strength, range, and power. Shorter's melody requires a sure and well developed instrument; it unfolds slowly and one cannot use tricks, but she nails it throughout, holding notes and displaying vibrato control, making each word count. The composer's quartet version exudes tastefulness, with Herbie Hancock, Elvin Jones and Ron Carter finding the stillness at the tune's center. The Carns take the song at an even slower pace than the

original, and Jean delivers the lyrics with genuine reverent feeling. The song becomes a prayer for her child to find its own way to healthy self-realization, and expresses her deep undying love for this girl. "Infant Eyes" was a ten-minute performance with little tempo, an unlikely potential hit. To appreciate it one had to stop and listen. Its tone was exalted, understated, and entirely dependent on the character of the lead singer and the lyric to carry it across.

The song opens up on very high plane:

There's no poet beneath the skies  
the voice will never arise  
that could sing of my love  
for my dear infant eyes.

Carn achieves poetry and union of lyric with melody. It reads as a personal ode to their daughter, but is also clearly universal. Although one might call the theme sentimental by definition, it does not project an idealized view of life, forecasting that "someday you'll grow up and have your problems." The mother implores the child to value love, caring, and sharing, identifying these qualities as the keys to happiness. The song closes with Jean achingly repeating the magic phrase "I love you (infant eyes)". It was a beautiful ballad and a great composition and performance when Shorter did it in 1964, but the Carns' treatment endows "Infant Eyes" with even greater cultural significance, linking it to the African American freedom struggle, female empowerment, and an overt celebration of black cultural creativity.

"Infant Eyes" also reads as an allegory for the raising up of a new black nation, with Jean playing the role of eternal earth mother, and progenitor of mankind. These resonances help to explain its appeal. Jean's rendering of Shorter's saxophone dynamics,

the rising and falling of notes, sustained with an assured vibrato, was a gift of song to be indulged. With “Infant Eyes” as their signature song, the Carns declared nurturing parenthood to be at the core of their conception of spirituality.

Motherhood was certainly viewed as the most important work for women by many in the Black Arts and Black Power movements, though it must be noted that the extent of male supremacist excesses in the movements is sometimes exaggerated. If one considers the poetry of female poets of the movement, motherhood is a theme, but by no means a dominant one, in the work of Sanchez, Giovanni, Evans, and Rodgers. Though the ideology of nation-building did entail child-bearing, child-rearing, and education of youth as primary tasks for women, and most of these women were mothers, few of their best-known works feature the image. The *Infant Eyes* lyric and album cover, as well as “Little B’s Poem,” stand out in representing motherhood as a joyous and perhaps holy responsibility for African American women, while projecting an image of female latency rather than domestic subservience. (This is an analysis of the artistic product; I claim no knowledge at all of the actual relationship dynamics between the Carns.)

It is notable that there are no man-woman love songs on any of their albums. Their success at projecting this modern hip Afrocentric jazz was quite influential in this era, as uplifting lyrics sung by strong female leads fronting modal-based bands became common. Groups such as Ensemble Al-Salaam (Beatrice Parker, vocalist), Oneness of Juju (Lady Eka-Ete), the Creative Arts Ensemble (B.J. Crowley), and Nation (Kehembe) seemed cast from a similar mold and offered important musical/cultural statements that merged spiritual concerns with the pursuit of collective empowerment. Despite the featuring of female vocalists possessing musical chops and sex appeal, these bands, like

the Carns, rarely if ever performed songs about love or sensuality. As just one example, on the Ensemble Al-Salaam's 1975 LP *The Sojourner*, the lyrics of tunes like "Ecstasy," "The Sojourner," and "Peace" promote as salvation the same matrix of music, nationalism and reverence that the Carns extolled.

### **Nina Simone – "My Sweet Lord"**

The contributions of Nina Simone, and indeed women and singers in general, are rarely accorded prominence in jazz narratives. Nonetheless she was a singular figure who combined a number of contradictory qualities – supper club elegance, cosmopolitan repertoire, diva-esque stage demeanor, Euro-classical pianistic leanings, swing, and gospel. Two elements which developed over the 1960s, her militant embrace of the anti-racist struggle and her increasing performance of contemporary pop or rock tunes, expanded her profile considerably from that of the highly successful entertainer she had become. Her turn towards more politicized material, such as self-penned works such as "Mississippi Goddam," "Four Women," and "Young Gifted and Black", was life-changing in many respects, and forms the chief part of her enduring legacy for most African Americans familiar with her. Although gospel music was a theme and reference throughout much of her career, of particular note for this discussion of black spirituality is her November 1971 performance of "My Sweet Lord/Today Is A Killer."

Creative and audacious, this gospel interpretation of the George Harrison number (itself a slowed down plagiarism of the Shangri-las' "He's So Fine") includes an interpolation of an Original Last Poets David Nelson's poem. Originally appearing on the album *Right On*, released in 1971, the poem is an introspective description of black (male) angst, given power by repetition and imagery. It begins with quiet

reflection and nature (“I often sit and stare at the sea, and dream dreams, hope hopes, and wish wishes.”) The poet reminisces about making love with his woman, but the “stark reality of today” intrudes, today with its “fiendish grin crushing wishes destroying dreams.” Judging from Nelson’s reading on the LP, the primary mode of the poem is rage.

With her extraordinary gift for emotional expressiveness, Simone significantly alters the mood of several of the poem’s evocative lines. She magnifies its wistfulness, and makes more romantic the remembered sexual encounter. Repetition is a major part of the performance. With added lyrics, Simone makes the song a direct plea to God to reveal herself.

“My Sweet Lord/Today Is a Killer” is a virtuoso performance of shifting tempos and moods, from meditative to joyous, featuring a woman in full control of the sound as the band and choir follow her lead and directions. It is gospel reimagined, with a pop song as liturgy, and many added lines that emphasize the difficulty of living in a world circumscribed by oppressive forces. Race and specific racial experiences are not explicitly mentioned. Simone recites the opening lines of the poem in a relatively straight fashion, over a vamping bass line, then moves to an out of tempo section which mixes Nelson’s words and the singer’s own interpolations. She laments the lack of real human contact in lines like “can’t get close to nobody no more.” One of the most poignant moments is when she begins the transition back to the Harrison song:

I never dreamed, I certainly never hoped  
that one day, I’d be screaming  
for something my mama told me I needed in the beginning,  
in the beginning, in the beginning...

She holds the last syllable incredibly long over a two note piano figure, which builds suspense before finally resolving in the return to the choir and Simone doing the “My Sweet Lord” refrain. Once more at the end, it is just Simone and her piano, as she beseeches “takes so long my Lord I need to be with you,” then closes with Nelson’s shocking final line, merging the poem and song in a perhaps blasphemous conjunction: “Today who are you Lord? You are a killer?”

Simone’s performance simultaneously acknowledges, celebrates, and challenges the African American religious heritage. It is a gospel performance of a pop tune, authored by an ex-Beatle, which itself is a universalist lament about the difficulty of monotheistic faith in a world full of suffering. Invested with the power of the chorus and Simone’s formidable skills – she once stated that her goal in singing was to give listeners courage, in exactly the same way as preachers sermonized to their congregations – the song carries the inspirational energy of the gospel tradition. At the same time, the Nelson poem connects it to not just the darker view of life in the U.S., but to the larger struggle for African American cultural resistance that the Last Poets represented. In this sense, “My Sweet Lord” joins the other performances described in this section as demonstrative of a new conception of black spirituality, and stands as one of the most significant statements by the High Priestess of Soul.

### **Pharoah Sanders**

The work of Pharoah Sanders in the late 1960s and early 1970s may represent the apex of this projection of a black nationalist spirituality. Signed to Impulse! Records after Coltrane’s death, Sanders embarked on a series of recordings that brought to the fore a lyrical side, as well as a fondness for vamps, layered small percussion, and double

basses. Especially in his association with vocalist Leon Thomas. Sanders employed both lyrics and wordless vocalizing as an integral part of his sound. In many ways, Pharoah Sanders is a central figure in this discussion of jazz and the Black Arts movement. Moreover, his music and persona foregrounds many of the themes – African identity, avant populism, black spirituality, collectivity, generosity – that we associate with the Black Arts. He was considered an icon to many writers and is the subject of poetic tributes. His music was embraced by cultural nationalists, and he was perhaps the most highly visible of musicians embodying this ethos. His connection to Coltrane and revision of this icon's tropes (reverence, Africa) authenticated his stature. What I will focus on here, primarily through a reading of his performances of "The Creator Has a Master Plan," "Izipho Zam," and "Healing Song," is his representation of black spirituality, because this was a most prominent aspect of his artistic persona.

Pharoah was marketed by Impulse! on all his early recordings as an artist whose primary concerns were spiritual in nature. He signed a contract with the company in late 1968 or early 1969; they signed Alice Coltrane as well, thus retaining the services of 2/5 of Coltrane's final quintet. Each was marketed as an avatar of Eastern spirituality, though with Alice Coltrane and her harp there was a strong Hindu cast which only increased over the life of the contract.<sup>120</sup> Somewhat in contrast to Sanders, her work was wholly otherworldly in reference. Sanders' LPs projected a more Afro-centered persona, not just in the African percussion, but in attire, song titles, and liner notes. The first LP of this contract (in 1966 he did a one off session, *Tauhid*, while still a member of the

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<sup>120</sup> See Alice Coltrane's Impulse! recordings *Huntingdon Ashram Monastery* (1969), *Journey in Satchidananda* (1971), and *Universal Consciousness* (1971) as examples.

Coltrane band), *Karma*, recorded in February 1969, casts the mold into which most of the other albums would conform. Two Chuck Stewart photos appear on the record, each of Sanders, alone, clad in a multicolored dashiki-like garment, sitting in half-lotus position in prayerful pose, eyes closed. His head is uncovered, unlike most other photos of him. In the cover shot his hands are outstretched as if letting in the spirit; the smaller photo on the inside foldout has him with head down and hands clasped together in his lap. In an exotic, vaguely Arabic inspired script, the LP bears the saxophonist's name and the title *Karma*. This Hindu concept of "what goes around comes around" had become familiar in countercultural circles. And then there are the curious contents of this inaugural Sanders album of the post-Coltrane era.

It contains two performances, one 33 minutes in length, spanning across the two sides, and the other the 5 ½ minute out-of-tempo meditation "Colors." The longer piece, "The Creator Has a Master Plan," would become both a classic and a cliché, depending on the listener, but at the time of its release there was little with which to compare it. Sun Ra released some extended jams on his hard to find Saturn label, though none that spanned over two sides of a disc as did "Creator." Coltrane likewise did no studio recordings outside of *Ascension* which approached the sheer length of this work. "Creator" is an audacious piece of work, conceived of as a half hour meditation that hews closely throughout to a very simple melody, and little harmonic variation. Its claim upon the attention of the listener was based on the feeling and strength of the tenor lead, the charisma and improvising talent of the unique vocalist, and the dense instrumental colorings of the band, awash in bells and small percussion.

Before going further into this classic performance, it is important to consider a project Sanders recorded one month prior in January 1969. Not released until 1975 on the Strata East label, “Izipho Zam” features a title tune that is faded out after 29 minutes, and offers a fruitful comparison with “Creator.” Several musicians appear on both sessions: pianist Lonnie Liston Smith, vocalist Leon Thomas. Guitarist Sonny Sharrock is the most prominent voice not on the “Creator” date; his deeply melodic rhythm guitar figures anchor the groove and offer counterpoint to the horns. Africa is the song’s immediate referent, from Thomas’ inimitable yodel-like improvisations to the extended small percussion jams at the beginning and in the middle of the piece. Unlike “Creator,” which has only two lines of text, “Izipho Zam” contains no words at all. The most obvious difference between the two is the extent to which the tenor saxophone plays: in “Izipho Zam” Sanders takes no real solos, and plays the horn at all not more than one fourth of the performance time, whereas “Creator” features the sax throughout. “Izipho Zam,” which is translated as ‘my gifts’ revels in multiple voices, and Thomas is actually more prominent than Sanders. This is also the case on “Prince of Peace,” one of the other two tunes on the record, for in this number there is no horn at all. “Izipho Zam” is the clear forerunner of “Creator,” sharing a similar conception and arrangement, of shifting movements united by an insistent groove created by the two double basses and multiple percussionists.

Containing several hooks, the central one being a slight adaptation of the bass line from the “Acknowledgment” section of Coltrane’s *A Love Supreme*, “Creator” builds at an extremely leisurely pace (some jazz critics accused Sanders of rhythmic and harmonic stasis). What is true is that the pattern of “Creator” would be a template for

many Pharoah tunes to come. This is exemplified by an out of tempo introduction, with small percussion and rumbling piano chords accompanying a reverent saxophone line, leading into the melody, which will eventually alternate with an up-tempo section. The music will sway back and forth from these poles of mellowness and intensity, the gritty grainy tone of the saxophone exemplifying the “terrible beauty” poets such as Baraka spoke of. There is an orgiastic break into sustained wailing where all instruments accelerate into the stratosphere, seemingly obliterating bar lines, chord progressions, and instrumental sonic limitations. Eventually the band returns to the serene melody, now experienced as a post-struggle achievement of rest and clarity. This describes the basic arc of the half hour “Creator.”

Extremely sympathetic and tasteful contributions made by James Spaulding playing delicate flute figures around Sanders’ melody, while Julius Watkins adds thoughtful fills on the French horn. The double bass work of Reggie Workman and Richard Davis anchor the performance with deeply empathic lines, while Nathaniel Bettis, a longtime Sanders band-member, adds an array of small percussion effects. The leader displays great strength and endurance as he blows fiercely throughout most of the record. The element that made “Creator” most memorable, however, was the collaboration with vocalist Leon Thomas. Here was a truly unique sound in jazz, or anywhere else for that matter.

Coltrane is the obvious key cultural and musical reference in “Creator,” and Pharoah’s post-1967 persona as a whole. Pharoah’s musical formula recapitulates key elements of Coltrane’s agenda, while adding more populist elements such as vocals and repetitive structures. He sought to capture African elements in his music and signaled

this intent with song titles. Coltrane added percussionists to his band in live performances and often encouraged younger musicians to participate. Likewise, one of Pharoah's signature sounds was the presence of small percussion, signifying Africa and The East. (In this same era, the Art Ensemble of Chicago utilized small percussion, but Sanders is different in that he created a chant, more strictly African in its organization.) Coltrane's impassioned, turbulent cry was part of Pharoah's sound, but he chose to section off this dimension of furious, rapid fire, off-the-scale wailing from the larger body of the performance, which maintained ostinato patterns that reiterated and stayed close to the melody: the primacy of the groove. Pharoah also perfected a gorgeous deep resonant tone capable of long sustained notes, which constantly referenced Coltrane's in conception and its bent towards lyricism. Pharoah moved the Eastern self-presentation further by his mode of attire, favoring nonwestern headgear and African and Third World flowing garbs, away from the fairly conservative suit and tie approach of Coltrane. Certainly Sanders' comments in interviews about trying to play the truth of one's self through the horn reflected a similar outlook of master and student.<sup>121</sup>

In some ways "Creator" is thus an homage to Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*, a recasting of the classic of religious devotion in new colors that were black, multicultural and pointed towards Africa. Even though, in this sense, we may view Sanders' new persona as a revision of Coltrane, it needs to be pointed out that there was no real reason to consider that his presentation would be commercially successful. One does not release 33 minute performances in the hopes of radio play (though there were radio edits of "Creator" that did get airplay). *Karma* found an audience, and was ranked by

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<sup>121</sup> Liner notes on: Sanders, Pharoah. *Tauhid*. Impulse! Records, 1967.

*Billboard* as a top ten jazz album for 1969, and #17 for the year.<sup>122</sup> It became popular enough to become a recognizable emblem of those years, and though relatively well received by contemporary critics, would suffer dismissal as a cliché and example of excess as time wore on. But truly there is little “commercial” about it; its relative success at the till was fortuitous rather than a foreseeable triumph of market pandering.

Of the three long masterworks of Sanders I consider here, only “Creator” is dominated by the saxophone, in the sense of the horn carrying the weight for most of the time. On “Izipho Zam” and “Healing Song,” the collective experience manifests through a long form in which the tenor is only one of many voices, where percussionists, bassists, and others have featured roles as well. A hallmark of these classic Sanders texts was the ample space given to his band members, their responsibility moving beyond support to co-creators of a thick light hypnotic groove, a vibe in musician parlance. Though Coltrane was a generous bandleader who often invited musicians on stage for live performances (much to the consternation of members of his band), his mature work is characterized by tour-de-force tenor improvisations of often great length and intensity, a conception in which his solos take up the great majority of time of any given selection. In “Creator,” Sanders is blowing the majority of the time, but is often playing the melody, the lead voice but one among many. He and Thomas are co-leads, who have about equal space on this half hour epic to be out front.

With his deep supple baritone, Leon Thomas offered rich readings of lyrics which are of rather simple sentiment. Through his vocal power, and the overall musical

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<sup>122</sup> Billboard Research Services. “Top Ten Jazz Albums of the Year.” New York: VNU Business Media, Inc., 1967-2005.

context, he lifted the trite lyric “The creator has a master plan/peace and happiness for every man” into a profound statement of faith that life/the world has meaning. In the context of the dense swirl of sound around him, the allusion to *A Love Supreme*, and the musical portrait of the conquering of chaos and the transcendence of turbulence, this line, the only words of the entire half hour, opened out into other areas of meaning rather than simple monotheistic declaration. (The liner notes contain the actual verse of the tune, which Thomas would sing on his version on his own albums. These two short stanzas spin a fable of a long ago reign of peace among humanity, and pine for the return of this state of grace.) Its universalism is clear; however, it was also a statement of black identity. As A.B. Spellman stated in 1969, Thomas' merging of elements of the vocal music of "Congolese pygmies" with "traditional blues lines" combined with Sanders' "deep and mellow" tone to produce a "positive black-loving experience."<sup>123</sup> Thomas' unique style of wordless improvisation, throat humming with precise note articulation, power and creativity, gave this band its signature sound. The effect, which could only be poorly compared to yodeling, evoked associations with the Congolese Twa people, Native American rites, and the ecstatic utterances of Coltrane and tongue-speakers. The name Pharoah, the use of small percussion, and the two leaders' neo-African attire were all signifiers of this cultural identity. Thomas and Sanders were seen as a dynamic duo of Afrocentric musical/spiritual seekers. Other material they would collaborate on would more explicitly identify them with black radical or cultural nationalist causes, but their chief legacy would always remain “Creator.”

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<sup>123</sup> Spellman, A.B. “Revolution In Sound.” In *Ebony Magazine. The Black Revolution*. Chicago: Johnson Publications, 1970. Page 92.

From 1969 through 1971 both artists enjoyed high profiles in the jazz world, record companies placing ads in the trade magazines, records being reviewed, appearances at festivals, articles in the jazz press. Thomas won several polls including “Best Jazz Vocalist” as voted by *Down Beat* readers. In his own music, Thomas, who first gained national attention through a stint with the Count Basie band, exhibited a greater range of style than his work with Sanders would indicate. Blues, jazz standards, and topical originals formed much of his repertoire, along with the modal Afro-explorations typified by tunes like “Creator” and “Umbo Weti.” In interviews as well as stage presence, Thomas projected a prophetic, engaged, community-oriented messenger of an expansive blackness that foregrounded African heritage/identity, and ancestor communion. Several of his songs were rooted in struggle of a very concrete nature, like “Damn Nam.” “Welcome to New York” advocated a rent strike; Thomas was “President of the International Tenants’ Association.” “Damn Nam” and his tribute to Malcolm X were on his first album, *Spirits Known and Unknown* from 1969. Flying Dutchman also put out one of the most unusual LPs of the era, called *SNCC’s Rap*. The majority of the album was speech excerpts of the fugitive black radical H. Rap Brown, who had gone underground after a series of arrests. These clips were interspersed with snatches of Leon Thomas performances. Julius Lester wrote on the ad copy, “[Thomas] adds another dimension to the concepts articulated by Rap... Brother Brown and Brother Thomas are saying the same thing, only with different weapons.”<sup>124</sup> These explicit and unabashed statements of solidarity with black power and radical protest were central to the Thomas persona, and thus inflect his expressions of spiritual faith with a weight not

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<sup>124</sup> Advertisement in *Jazz & Pop* (February 1971).

readily apparent in the words themselves. Those who revered him as an avatar of the black consciousness movement heard in “Creator” something affirming of not just optimism but their essential orientation to the world also. Thomas sang not merely as an advocate of universalist love but specifically of black and radical faith as well. He stated his belief in a 1970 interview: “The history of music is a sound record of the people!... The perpetrators of evil are going to be vamped on, fallen. Everybody’s going to come to the Coliseum to see the Christians persecuted but the lions are going to leap into the stands.”<sup>125</sup>

Some observers considered the tune “Hum Allah,” recorded October 1969 for Sanders’ next Impulse! LP *Jewels of Thought*, to be a derivative follow-up to the commercial success of “Creator,” as the talents of Sanders and Thomas merged again to deliver a universalist paean to peace over a melodic vamp. In fact this was the second recorded version of the song, the first version of which, called “Prince of Peace,” was done at an independent recording session one month before *Karma*, and ultimately released in 1975 by Strata East. There are notable differences between the two performances, besides the fact that the remake clocks in at 15 minutes, six minutes longer than the original. In the first, Sanders never picks up his horn, instead playing small percussion and bells while Thomas on vocals and Lonnie Liston Smith on piano are the prominent voices. In the remake Sanders does play the melody and offer a blistering solo in a new intense up-tempo section. The other significant difference is Thomas’ spoken introduction, wherein he asks listeners to join in hand clapping “in this universal prayer for peace... the will of the people and the will of the land.” However,

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<sup>125</sup> Rawlings, Tyson. “Africa Is Where I Am,” *Jazz & Pop* (November 1970): 18.

Thomas' improvisations are not delivered with the same intensity and expansiveness in the remake. These changes may well reflect concerns of audience accessibility. The main point here is that in "Hum Allah," we have another representation of an alternative spiritual sensibility, though one that alludes to a number of traditions. "Prince of Peace" is a phrase most associated with the Jesus figure of Christianity, while Allah of course is the Islamic godhead. The Hum-Allah part, connected to Thomas' unique African-inspired throat humming, evokes the mystical communion with African ancestors that was prominent in Thomas' rhetoric.<sup>126</sup>

As it turns out, Sanders was becoming increasingly attracted to the religion of Islam. The third album of his Impulse! contract, *Summun Bukmun Umyun*, recorded in July 1970, bore an Islamic title (translated as "Deaf, Dumb, and Blind") and its liner notes, written by one Jameelah Ali, reads primarily as a Quranic screed against unbelievers. (Jazz musicians converting to Islam was certainly nothing new in 1970; figures such as Sahib Shihab, Shafi Hadi, Art Blakey, and Yusef Lateef had done so in the 1950s, and a number of people did so in this 1970 era, including Doug Carn, Tyrone Washington, and McCoy Tyner.) There are layers of signification to this LP title. Though Sanders' religious faith was of the Sunni variety, "deaf, dumb, and blind" was a catch phrase of the Nation of Islam, with whom Sunnis have major theological differences. If the liner notes are engaging any religious sectarianism, it is hard to tell: the "El Kafirun or The Rejectors of Faith" criticized therein are described as those who would deny beauty, truth, spiritual enlightenment, and the appeals of suffering

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<sup>126</sup> Rawlings, 15-18. And Klee, Joe H. "Leon Thomas: Avant-Garde With Roots." *Down Beat*, 10 December 1970, 18-19.

creatures.<sup>127</sup> Interestingly enough, though, one of the LP's two selections is an eighteen minute treatment of the Christian hymn "Let Us Go Into the House of the Lord," arranged by Lonnie Liston Smith, along with percussionist Nat Bettis and bassist Cecil McBee, the only holdovers from previous Sanders albums. This juxtaposition of Christian and Muslim odes reinforces the synoptic nature of the spirituality Sanders sought to express.

After Thomas and Sanders ended their partnership in 1970, Sanders continued to mine the same black spirituality territory, though his music would now be absent of lyrical content. "Healing Song" is the centerpiece of Sanders' *Live at The East*, released in late 1972 on the Impulse! label. "Healing Song," with its uncredited female chorus humming the six note melody throughout, its virtuoso double bass display of bedrock soul and agile lyrical fleetness by Cecil McBee and Stanley Clarke, its slowly unfolding layers of majestic reverence, and warm, ecstatic solos, is another example of Sanders' projection of a simultaneously universalist and black spirituality. Sanders signals his affinity with the black cultural nationalist project with this album title, referring to the important Brooklyn organization called The East (the primary subject of chapter 4). In fact, the LP was recorded at a studio with many East folks in attendance at the saxophonist's request. The original idea to record at The East had to be scrapped for technical reasons, but Sanders wanted to capture the "vibe" of that cultural space.<sup>128</sup> Although many had no idea what The East was and could draw no significance from the album title, it was a demonstration of the saxophonist's continuing support for the

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<sup>127</sup> Ali, Jameelah. Liner note to Sanders, Pharoah, *Summun Bukmun Umyun*. Impulse!, 1970.

cultural nationalist project. There were no expository liner notes; other than an incomplete listing of the personnel, the only information the jacket contained was a Sanders' poem affirming the universal nature of the Creator, whose love and essence dwelled in all humans.

## CONCLUSION

The intent of the foregoing discussion is to demonstrate that the Black Arts impulse was in fact a prominent element in jazz during the late 1960s and 1970s, the high tide of literary and visual artistic production most often referred to by the term. Even though John Coltrane (and Charlie Parker to a much lesser extent) were the most widespread and protean icons of jazz for the Black Arts writers, in terms of musical production itself, performers of far less-lasting exposure more extensively expressed the explicit engagement with tropes such as Africa, revolution, and black identity and spirituality in this later period.

Musicians used their art to engage political struggle, to focus attention on African American cultural identity, and to explore alternative modes of spiritual awareness. Through visual cues, including attire and album titles and art, and verbal signs such as assumed names, liner notes, and interview statements, many artists made clear that their work was part of a larger movement for change in a racist society. In the music itself, they often incorporated lyrics and poetry to make explicit statements about their concerns and social-cultural philosophies. In many cases, they self-consciously drew on musical elements - modes, rhythms, effects, and instruments - that signified or evoked aspects of an African and African American cultural heritage. Considered

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<sup>128</sup> Weusi, Jitu. Telephone interview, 27 September 2003.

together with the organizational and entrepreneurial activities of musicians during this period, this examination of some of the recordings of the era substantiates the claim that there was a Black Arts movement in jazz. Most of its adherents did not employ the term, but in artistic and professional decisions they manifested a focus on the matrix of ideas embodied in the term.

## CHAPTER 3

### AFRICAN AMERICAN JAZZ CRITICISM AND THE BLACK ARTS

This chapter focuses on the response of black intellectuals to currents in jazz during the 1960s and 1970s, and their attempts to define larger cultural meanings and contexts for this art. In so doing many advanced ideas about the state of US society, the status of the African American challenge to racism, and the nature of this thing called African American culture, and contested mainstream white American definitions of the same. The musicians themselves advanced ideas about black culture, through the music, verbally and in writing, and through a variety of extramusical activities, which influenced some of these writers considerably. This discourse about jazz was a site for the working out of concepts central to the idea of the Black Arts, and exposed a division of perspective on the question of militancy in public expression among African Americans.

This chapter begins by examining the work of four significant African American jazz critics of the period: Barbara Gardner, LeRoi Jones, A.B. Spellman, and Ron Welburn, seeking to discover how the thrust of their writings bears on the duties and definition of black culture. Next will be a consideration of the coverage of jazz and black music in several prominent black periodicals, namely *SoulBook*, *Liberator*, and *Negro Digest/Black World*. The final section will analyze the cultural politics of three important black owned and operated jazz magazines, *The Cricket*, *The Grackle*, and *Bebop and Beyond*. An examination of this material will reveal a pronounced concern

with issues such as music and racial/cultural identity, concern with established jazz institution's neglect of important figures, distortion of history, and a consistently expressed desire to provide forums for the artists' own words, thoughts, and perspectives to be heard.

### **BARBARA GARDNER**

I will begin this discussion with one of two significant black jazz critics to emerge in 1959, Barbara Gardner. Later to become famous as a successful advertising executive and entrepreneur, Gardner joined *Down Beat* in late 1959 and through 1966 wrote over two dozen profiles of musicians, in addition to many record reviews. (There was also an important review of Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land*, of which I shall make mention later). The subjects of her usually sympathetic, sharply drawn portraits were often folks who could be called purveyors of "soul jazz." All of her subjects were African American, by whose choice I know not yet. Cannonball Adderley was her first profile in October 1959; others included Horace Silver, Jimmy Smith, Bobby Timmons, Ramsey Lewis, Shirley Scott, and Ray Charles. Gardner wrote about established acts such as the Count Basie Band, Sweets Edison, Joe Williams, and Slide Hampton. Some of her best work was the profiles of vocalists Sarah Vaughan, Carmen McRae, Nancy Wilson, and Lurlean Hunter. But also included among her portraits were such outspoken artists as Abbey Lincoln, Oscar Brown, and Miles Davis. Unlike her contemporary LeRoi Jones, Gardner had no interest in avant garde jazz (she never even mentions the subject or any artists who could be so called), nor did she indulge in explicit condemnations of the racial status quo. There was, however, significant social critique in her writing, and if she never advocated black self-determination at the

institutional level, she did make clear the importance of understanding black men and women as full human beings, heirs to a strong cultural tradition, rather than through the prism of racial stereotypes.

Perhaps Gardner's basic perspective can be glimpsed in a July 1961 review of *Les McCann Ltd. In San Francisco*. "It has always been my aim to be just another writer," she opens the piece, soon requesting that "just for this one review permit me to be a Negro reviewer—not a New Negro, but an ordinary one..." Her main point in this piece is that McCann is exploiting and distorting an authentic southern African American culture for apparently commercial purposes. It is easy to take on the trappings of black folksiness, such as down home expressions and gospelish musical motifs. But the claim that these represent the "American Negro heritage" deeply offends her. Responding to McCann's popularity, she avers that if this heritage was truly expressed, "it can be assured that the work will not be so quickly recognized and understood." She makes a distinction between the album's jazz rating (2 stars) and its value as entertainment (3 1/2 stars). Although this review never mentions any other names, the soul jazz phenomenon, or structures of US racism for that matter, Gardner's remarks have great resonance beyond the apparent lameness of the McCann record. She points out that claims to universal Negrohood for McCann were made by others, and not the artist. Companies, the public, and some artists, were willing to trade in stereotypes of black expression, which demeaned black heritage and black people. And though as a writer she strove for "objectivity," it was important to her as an African American to challenge for once such traducing of the tradition. Her assertion that expression of this authentic black heritage would not prove so popular clearly posits an oppositional

identity for black music, even though this is an understated theme in her writing as compared to Baraka.

Her 1966 review of *Manchild in the Promised Land* further amplifies some of these points. “We are plodding painfully through an era of black times in which black hands write black thoughts about the blackness of it all,” she opens, parodying the rising black militant consciousness of the mid-1960s. But this is a misleading beginning, for she quickly identifies gullible white public, and cynical corporations and marketers as principal figures in a modern minstrel show, all failing to recognize that “everything is not going to be all right *ever*—until everyone admits we’re in a sad state of affairs.” Author Claude Brown’s poorly written manuscript rings false for Gardner: the family “is the typical celluloid group, tailor-made and belched full blown out of Hollywood.” In lieu of a more balanced portrait of Harlem, which would not have bestseller potential, Brown and his publishers put forth “some pretty commercial concepts in the spiciest terms available” – a reference to the book’s profanity and themes of gang violence, crime, drug abuse, and teen sexuality. Gardner did credit some of *Manchild*’s quality of language and sense of humanity, but finally felt that the stereotypical aspects ensured that few of its subtleties would be understood by a public weaned on such stereotypes. Though these remarks clearly reveal her genteelness, more fundamentally they express her concern that a full picture of African American culture and people—which also entailed recognition of destructive aspects of racism—was absolutely necessary to the health of US society.

Gardner has to be seen as one of the more discerning critics of this soul jazz phenomenon. Although she was often quite critical of specific albums, and even artists

such as McCann and Lewis, in each case she was able to praise certain of their efforts. Her writing overall clearly revealed an affinity for the musicians who fall under this label. This is clear by the list of her profile subjects.

An important aspect of her writing was her treatment of women artists, mostly vocalists. In keeping with her understated style (understatement was a quality she often mentioned in discussing her subjects), Gardner made consistent if subtle points about the problematic image of black women in US society. At least three dimensions of the problem concern her: the impact of white beauty standards on black women's self-images, artists' dependence on dominating men controlling all aspects of their careers, and the marketing of women as sex objects rather than musicians. (It seems evident from what is known of Gardner's own biography that at least some of these issues had much resonance for her personally.) The March 1961 Sarah Vaughan profile fills the bill on all counts. Few music writers would dare open an article about such a lofty figure with "As Sarah Vaughan recalls it, her life began with a devastating, unutterable resentment of being dark-skinned and unattractive." (Of course, few would ever have elicited the comment to begin with, a testimony to some combination of sensitive interviewing skills, social connections, and race/gender identification.) This is no random confession in Gardner's hands, though, for she connects this psychological insight with a loneliness and insecurity that seem to stay with the singer and determine her hyper-dependent relationships with two husband-managers. The first husband sent her to the plastic surgeon and elocution lessons, and selected all her clothes for her, even gave her the nickname Sassy. About her then-current husband, Gardner notes that he

is the center of her universe... She makes no decision regarding either her career or her personal schedule without her husband's approval. She is openly adoring of him, and obedient to the point of subservience.

The tone is not mocking or condescending, but the dubiousness with which the reporter views such gender relations is apparent.

The September 1961 article about Abbey Lincoln intimates similar disquiet about women, images and control. Published after the issue of Lincoln's important, controversial album *Straight Ahead* but before the infamous Ira Gitler review of it<sup>129</sup>, "Metamorphosis" remarkably makes no mention of any of Lincoln's music, save for a brief reference to the *Freedom Now Suite*. Max Roach is mentioned only once in a list of influential musicians. What the piece is about is race, gender, and attitude, specifically Lincoln's notorious "bitterness" about white racism. Lincoln returns to the film *Gone With The Wind* as a source of anti-black woman stereotypes she struggles against. A centerpiece of the article, as indeed it is in Lincoln's self-narrative generally, is her guided pursuance of sexpot supper club stardom in the 1950s, her rejection of this image/lifestyle as she became more aware of and interested in her heritage as an African American woman, and her subsequent studies in black history and culture. "Today," Gardner notes, "she unflinchingly refers to herself as a black nationalist." The overall picture that emerges of Lincoln here is that of a noble albeit troubled artist, whose greatest virtue is her inability to compromise her values and ideals.

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<sup>129</sup> Originally published in the 9 November 1961 issue. It was reprinted in the 15 March 1962 issue as the catalyst for the cover story "Racial Prejudice in Jazz," a "panel discussion" about "Jim Crow and Crow Jim in jazz" with Gitler, and several other musicians and writers (all white) interrogating Lincoln and Roach about their views.

Gardner's profiles of Shirley Scott, Nancy Wilson, Carmen McRae and Lurlean Hunter likewise share concerns with the impact of gender on their careers. The issue of being marketed as a sexual object, the difficulties of balancing work and motherhood, the expectations of male managers and bandleaders play key roles in these narratives. The question of values, i.e., what constitutes success?, comes up repeatedly. The women's preference to be at home with family as much as possible, at the possible expense of greater exposure, challenges expectations that musicians will sacrifice all in pursuit of the muse. In Wilson's case, her decision to move away from the blues belting that garnered her early fans (and comparisons to Dinah Washington) towards material and a stage presentation less debilitating on the long range health of her voice and person is highlighted and contrasted with others regarded as early burnouts. Thus there is a significant critique of masculinist as well as racist tendencies within the jazz industry in Gardner's writings.

*Down Beat* was quite happy to have Gardner's services. When her first article appeared, her picture and a brief profile were included. At that point, she was the magazine's sole black presence. Other *Down Beat* writers quoted her in their articles, and she was soon on the masthead as a contributing editor. She was no insurgent, did not challenge the overall political economy of the music industry, and the burgeoning freedom struggle was rarely an overt presence in her writings. Although she was a discerning critic of soul jazz, seeing it at its best as vital and emotionally powerful, she was clearly no fan of explicit racial appeals. Her last pieces appear in the magazine in 1966, after which she turned fulltime to the advertising industry, never returning to music journalism. Her contributions subsequently went into eclipse, and she is rarely

cited or mentioned today or by later generations of black writers. Perhaps the main reason for this is that these other writers were/are interested in musicians other than the ones she wrote about. None of the figures I have discussed here, except possibly Lincoln, would become icons of the Black Arts era, and jazz scholarship has yet to undertake serious study of most of them either. Also significant is that Gardner's writings were restricted to the pages of the almost all white *Down Beat*, and the liner notes she wrote for VeeJay Records. She seems not to have participated in black publications through which to reach significant numbers of African Americans. For instance, she did no writing for, nor had any work reprinted in *Negro Digest*, which was based in Chicago. Nonetheless, Barbara Gardner was an important voice, and a significant link in the chain. Most of the folks she wrote about were successful (in terms of establishing a living wage and some visibility), and tended to be jazz acts whose core audiences were African Americans. Though of course writing for the all-white *Down Beat*, and explicitly claiming no special insider racial status or insurgent agenda, she created a body of work of commentary about black jazz performers by a member of the black community, work which took as a given a rich heritage of black culture, a musical community composed primarily of creative black folks, whose contributions to and influence within America was obvious and profound.

### **AMIRI BARAKA**

The music writings of Amiri Baraka, long known as LeRoi Jones, present a contrast to Gardner's rhetorical and musical sensibilities as well as perhaps partial explanation for her historical obscurity. His confrontational style and pronounced animus towards the Negro middle class was of great influence on young black

intellectuals, as was his fervent championing of the avant garde and his explicit linkage of those sounds to the rising black freedom struggle. Baraka played no small role in the creation of heroic images for men like Coltrane, Shepp, Taylor, Ayler et. al. The edge of radicalism, the oppositional stance perceived in their music, all served to make less radical artists such as Cannonball, Horace Silver, and Jimmy Smith appear, well, less radical, less relevant, in younger black eyes. As a critic, editor, poet, and organizer, Amiri Baraka was the catalytic figure in the generation of a militant, oppositional discourse of African American jazz commentary and activism. His 1963 opus *Blues People* became a vastly influential work, but his prolific work as an essayist and reviewer exerted great impact also. He published in major jazz publications (*Down Beat, Metronome, Jazz Review*) as well as bohemian literary and African American journals. Always insurgent, his perspective did undergo significant shifts during the 1960s, particularly around the question of the relevance of African American popular culture. But his explicit calls for black self-determination—at the cultural, political, and institutional levels—marked his work as a continuing challenge to prevailing socioeconomic relationships in the society and the music industry.

Baraka was already a Greenwich Village poet of some repute when his music reviews and views began appearing. Like Gardner, his first such work was published in *Jazz Review* in 1959, an article about saxophonist/vocalist Buddy Tate's gig at the Celebrity Club in Harlem. Entitled "Showtime at the Old Corral," the piece is instructive for what it reveals of the young Baraka's cultural politics. His stance towards this jazz-oriented all black affair is that of the outsider, almost anthropological in tone. There is the sense of documenting a hidden cultural activity: "These affairs... have been

going on every weekend for something like eight years and, from what I was told, are always crowded; and Buddy Tate is always there.” He does not take part in any of the verbal jousting and dancing rituals he describes, maintaining ironic distance throughout. His keen eye notes the people’s clothing, body language, boxes of fried chicken, and the effective pacing of the show, the rhythm of the energy exchange between musicians and audience. But the attitude towards the band, and these Harlemites’ musical taste, is one of condescension. The music is of the past, “the kind of music I had grown up on, a style “you can hear in almost every older Negro ‘club’ or ‘dance’ band throughout the country.” He is startled to hear the pianist playing “a very ‘modern’ solo.” Nonetheless, by the end of the piece the writer had been won over, deciding that this Negro dance band was “swinging now, as hard as any big band I had heard in the last few years...” The alienation and skepticism towards African American tastes in jazz clearly manifested in this article would soon be wedded to an explicit, radical critique of the Negro middle class. But Baraka would eventually reevaluate his position on African American popular music traditions, and celebrate the discerning nature of black listening audiences.

For the next year the LeRoi Jones byline was attached to reviews of blues records, a slam of Langston Hughes’ *Tambourines to Glory*, a rip of the film version of *Porgy and Bess*. His next analysis of jazz I have seen is a June 1960 review of *Cannonball Adderley Quintet in San Francisco*, also for *The Jazz Review*. In addition to being one of the truly successful jazz acts of the day (in terms of exposure, sales, and general critical approval), Adderley was also regular contributor to *The Jazz Review*, publishing reviews and other articles in the magazine. In this review we find the earliest

articulation of the pronounced antipathy towards soul jazz/ hard bop that was a main characteristic of Baraka's musical criticism in the 1960s. The critique (of Adderley) is profound and total. The saxophonist is "one of those gifted people who is perfect for their times," the review begins, taking due notice of the band's great skill and mastery of currently fashionable jazz trends, such as "hard boppish feeling" and the gospel sound. The rhythm section "often cook and they're always funky. (As what jazz musician ain't these days?) A perfect 'fifties group..." Though clearly cynical about the soul direction in jazz in this first paragraph, it is in the second and final paragraph that Baraka delivers the full indictment: "The only major drawback with this group is that they are unoriginal and dull." They were exemplars of an approach to jazz that lacked creativity, invention, adventure, expressive only of fashionable style:

At best, it is pleasant dilution...at worst it is ugly and boring. A willingness to **use** us, to **fool** us into thinking that what is happening is serious, meaningful, or emotionally valid. It makes me think that if any of us are going to listen to jazz seriously it is better that we **resist** this kind of dross.

Adderley was at this point a darling of the critics and jazz audiences generally, but it is important to note that he was an enduring favorite of African American jazz listeners. (Gardner's perspective was far more in tune with those of black jazz fans than Baraka.) A key phrase in his condemnation here is the notion of listening to jazz "seriously"; it is another signal of Baraka's alienation from the black popular taste, expressing hostility to music as entertainment.<sup>130</sup> For Baraka, the question of explicit seriousness (undefined

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<sup>130</sup> In an album review in *Kulchur* (Vol. 2, No. 7, Autumn 1962), Baraka uses very similar terms to dismiss the work of the Jazztet, the Benny Golson-Art Farmer led group

here but by which he seems to mean directly challenging aesthetic and political convention) was the measure of artistic merit. As he studied more in black music, he began to realize that this was not necessarily the criteria of the black masses.

For Baraka, of course, the black music which evinced the necessary seriousness of purpose was what would soon be called the avant garde, most notably the work of Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, Sun Ra, later John Coltrane, Albert Ayler, and Archie Shepp. Baraka would soon become the most outspoken proponent of this “new thing” (also called, among other things, new music and free jazz.) In Baraka’s telling, this was the most progressive site of African American cultural expression, and an analogue to the burgeoning African American freedom struggle. Part of the great energy and zeal with which Baraka presented his argument doubtlessly stemmed from his recognition of certain obvious paradoxes that needed explaining. If the music of Ornette, Cecil et. al. was the new black sound, why were so few blacks in attendance at the music’s performances (which in New York tended to be downtown, in the largely white but integrated Village where the interracially married Jones lived)? Why did the music have no home in any African American institutions or communities? What was the connection between the music of these modernists, the African American musical tradition, and the seemingly absent black listeners? These are some of the underlying questions of Baraka’s thrust, especially his 1963 opus, the widely influential *Blues People*.

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which garnered widespread critical praise and fan recognition during its existence from 1959-1962. Incidentally, both Golson and Farmer wrote a few pieces for *Jazz Review*.

It grew out of a 1961 *Metronome* article in which he laid out the basic thesis and framework. African American music inherently inscribed black consciousness, and was the site of racial and class struggle from the beginning of Negro slavery. The music of the black masses resisted at its core white bourgeois acculturation and always expressed a continually developing though communally rooted sense of racial identity. Bluesman Sonny Terry and free jazz saxophonist Ornette Coleman are cited at the end of the article as unlikely to appear on either Ed Sullivan or in *Ebony* magazine, an example of how mainstream America and the Negro middle class have rejected authentic African American expression in pursuit of bourgeois blandness.<sup>131</sup> *Blues People* expanded these arguments and developed the anti-hard bop line further, seeing it as an ineffective response to the 1950s whitening process in jazz as exemplified by the elevation of Dave Brubeck and the cool school:

The hard boppers sought to revitalize jazz, but they did not go far enough. Somehow they lost sight of the important ideas to be learned from bebop and substituted largeness of timbre and quasi-gospel influences for actual rhythmic or melodic diversity and freshness. The hard bop groups utilized rhythms that are amazingly static and regular when compared to the music of the forties. (And merely calling tunes *Dis Heah* or dropping *g*'s from titles is not going to make the music more compelling.)<sup>132</sup>

(There seems to have been no such tune as “Dis Heah” in 1963; the following year, organist Wild Bill Davis released an album with that title—the title song turned out to be the Bobby Timmons-penned “This Here,” the first hit record by Cannonball’s quintet. Ah, another crack at the Cannon.) For Baraka, Adderley, Horace Silver, Art

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<sup>131</sup> Baraka, Amiri. “Blues, Black & White America.” *Metronome* (March 1961): 11-15.

<sup>132</sup> Baraka, Amiri. *Blues People*. New York: Morrow, 1963. Page 217.

Blakey, even Mingus<sup>133</sup> indulged in ethnic pandering to blues form and stylistic gestures without the requisite creative questing at the heart of jazz, and thus were essentially reactionary. Thus the avant garde appeared at the end of the 1950s to bring back that uncompromised liberatory spirit.

This liberatory spirit was not to be confused with “protest music,” however. Jones in this period had nothing good to say about such projects as Max Roach’s *Freedom Now Suite* or Mingus’ “Fables of Faubus.” (Presumably Randy Weston’s *Uhuru Afrika* elicited similar scorn, though this is conjecture: I have not come across any Baraka discussion of Weston’s work.) “[S]inging about how evil a man Faubus is, or how Africa will rise, does nothing but lower the quality of music these men make,” the poet wrote in *Kulchur* in 1962. For Baraka, the discomfort aroused by the modernists was more meaningful:

The “bitterness” that some blindfolded “state department” musicians have found in the playing of Sonny Rollins, or the “emotional agony” and “cynicism” these same well paid finks find in Ornette Coleman’s music is sufficient musical protest. It also, as a fact of social “statement,” serves as a social act that is anti-establishment.<sup>134</sup>

(Note that here the unhearing enemies of the avant garde are other musicians rather than the usual typical targets of this charge, critics and club owners.) What is most interesting about this piece is Baraka’s apparent rejection of verbal exhortation and explication as a part of the presentation of jazz. It is related somewhat to his rejection of soul and funkiness, as a too easy and stylized gesture towards blackness. But given the obvious

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<sup>133</sup> In a review of the bassist’s *Wonderland* LP, Baraka refers rather disparagingly to Mingus’ blues and gospel drenched late 1950s-early 1960s music as “Charlie’s moaning and singing period.” (See *Kulchur*, Vol. 2 No. 8 (Winter 1962): 103).

militant edge to the work of Roach and Mingus in this period, and Baraka's pronounced desire for social change, his rejection of this music seems rather contradictory.

*Blues People* had a tremendous impact on other African American intellectuals outside of the Village. The explicit linking of current jazz with the aspirations and actions of rights advocates became implicit in the writings of young radicals, and Brother LeRoi was an oft-cited authoritative voice on the subject. *Blues People*, a book both acclaimed and controversial for its challenge to integrationist ideals and its assertion of an insistent black nationalist impulse at the heart of African American culture, galvanized the thinking of many young radicals about the centrality of music to the life and struggles of the people. In fact, although the label would come into vogue years in the future, *Blues People* has to be regarded as one of the seminal texts of black cultural nationalism. Its agenda was multiple: to take on and argue against a racist bourgeois moribund music establishment, to assert the need for black participation in the discourse, to justify the emerging, marginalized jazz avant gardé as existing firmly within a centuries long tradition of liberationist black cultural expression, to link this cultural expression to the burgeoning movement for freedom in the US and elsewhere, and to continue Baraka's lifelong excoriation of the Negro middle class.

#### A.B. SPELLMAN

Popularizer if not coiner of the phrase "Black Arts," his militant musical advocacy preceded that moment by several years. By the point in 1965 when he established the Harlem Black Arts Repertory Theater and School, he had, primarily through his music journalism (especially *Blues People*), already exerted a significant

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

impact on young African American intellectuals in particular.<sup>135</sup> One individual who, although he was clearly influenced by and worked closely with Baraka, made a unique contribution to the African American discourse of jazz was A.B. Spellman. He and Baraka shared a similar musical sensibility: both were disdainful of most hard bop, enamored of the avant garde, explicitly critical of racism in the business and country, and contemptuous of American middlebrow taste. Each was an essayist on U.S. social developments and an experimental poet as well, who met at Howard University in the early 1950s. Each at the time had a white wife and lived in the Village. They each criticized major protest statements such as Mingus' *Fables of Faubus* and the Max Roach's *Freedom Now Suite*.<sup>136</sup> They championed the same figures: Coltrane, Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman. Spellman could be just as harsh as Baraka (they both did vicious reviews of Rahsaan Roland Kirk in *Kulchur*<sup>137</sup>) but was often more receptive to figures such as Art Farmer and Benny Golson than his friend would be.

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<sup>135</sup> He was of course quite well known before this for his poetic and editorial work on the avant garde arts scene, had published several essays of social criticism in a variety of white journals small and large, and his 1964 play *Dutchman* made him a national figure of some notoriety.

<sup>136</sup> Baraka's *Wonderland* review cited above; Spellman, "The next to the last generation of blues singers." (*Kulchur*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (Spring 1962): 58). Spellman's criticism is more muted; he notes that these records made "a deliberate sacrifice of art for social message."

<sup>137</sup> "Roland Kirk is possibly the worst thing that has happened to Jazz since Boyd Raeburn," Baraka opens his review of Kirk's *Domino* LP. Rahsaan's live act "is just too much, a cross between a Roman circus and watching Jack Palance get run over by a tank in *Attack*. The experience leaves one feeling somewhat in sympathy with Ross Barnett." (*Kulchur*, Vol. 3, No. 8 (Spring 1963): 95). Spellman employed similar language to eviscerate the saxophonist in a review of *The Roland Kirk Quartet Meets Benny Golson Orchestra*: "If Kirk's oeuvre isn't 2/3rds shit to date, Skippy. Kirk live is a one man circus, literally: he's barker, shake dancer, trapeze act, lion tamer, and all around freak." (See: *Kulchur*, Vol. 4, No. 13 (Spring 1964): 98).

Although he wrote for many publications, we may discern much of Spellman's contribution by a look at four of his most important pieces. Writing in *Kulchur* in 1962, he surveyed the landscape of black music in a piece called "The next to the last generation of blues singers." In it we see some consistent themes. "Negroes are beating their way into the American middle class, implementing its values while sacrificing many of their own." Spellman notes in his first sentence, contextualizing the emergence of the commodification of soul. The music industry in this reading realized that there would thus somehow be a market for down-home black music, and 1950s stars like Horace Silver, Mahalia Jackson, and especially Ray Charles helped companies to popularize such modes of expression. But "such conspicuous blueness has not made for healthier music." (Regarding his general skepticism towards the hard bop/ soul jazz genre. Spellman recently noted, "I was more concerned with musicians who were stretching. I thought that was more consistent with a more serious, advanced, and pugnacious attitude among African American people that I admired... people who were involved in the struggle."<sup>138</sup>) For Spellman, the fad of funkiness and bluesiness was offensive, sterile, and could only please audiences who knew no better. In this same period, certain lightweight protest songs by Babs Gonzales, Oscar Brown, and Jon Hendricks were promoted, while more challenging and militant musicians like Mingus and Roach were passed off as madmen. The ascendancy of Coltrane let perceptive listeners know that soul could not be restricted to obvious blues and gospel licks, and encouraged exploration of the question of form in jazz. The piece ends with a comparison of two landmark album releases from 1961, Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz*,

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<sup>138</sup> Spellman, A.B. Telephone interview, 18 February 2004.

and Coltrane's *Africa Brass*. The latter album did not go far enough into the jungle, Spellman lamented, while Coleman recorded "a communal music that leaves each voice intact and distinct. *Free Jazz* is, for now, perfect jazz."

Spellman's 1966 *Four Lives in the Bebop Business* was an extremely important work, which focused on the travails of Coleman, Cecil Taylor, Jackie McLean, and Herbie Nichols. The original idea had been for the fourth figure to be Coltrane, who demurred, Spellman says, because he was not ready to go public with the new mystical direction his studies were taking him. This would have given the book a slightly different flavor, as there would have been one financially successful member of an otherwise penurious quartet, rather than the utterly tragic figure of Nichols. *Four Lives* marked the second monograph on jazz (following *Blues People*) published by an African American, and those four mini-biographies, each of which featured extensive, extended passages in the musician's own words, corroborated Spellman's and Baraka's charges of a thoroughly hostile and racist political economy of the music. In some ways it was a follow-up to *Blues People*, as that book's theories and assumptions were borne out in the history and testimony of the artists. Such aspects include the concerns with the meaning of art, its place in the society, racism, the relationship to and roots of musicians in black communities, the problem of reaching black audiences, class and musical sensibilities in black communities, plus comments, particularly by Taylor, that echo *Blues People* directly. In an era before significant numbers of autobiographies of musicians were published, *Four Lives* provided a wealth of first hand testimony about the aesthetic visions of and perceptions about US racism by black musicians that helped to articulate the stakes in the political and cultural struggles taking place in that decade.

By 1969 Spellman, who had not moved uptown and condemned all interracial contact in 1965 as Baraka had done, had undergone his own racial radicalization. Divorcing his first wife (white) and moving to Atlanta in 1967 to become more involved in the movement<sup>139</sup>, he would write in *Negro Digest* in 1969 that “it is a waste of time, energy and the psychic juices to become involved with white people in any way, shape or form.”<sup>140</sup> During this time he wrote one of the most perceptive pieces on jazz and the Black Arts imperative in the post-Coltrane era, “Revolution in Sound,” published in an *Ebony* special issue from August 1969. Taking Coltrane as central figure, Spellman charted the postwar rise of black consciousness among jazz musicians (beginning with Charlie Parker and the bebop movement), which had culminated in the present era where a communal ethos of Afrocentric spirituality, musical ecumenicalism, and desire for economic and institutional self-determination was widespread. He identified something not written about much, a “consciously black” mode of playing that animated the music of a host of important players. This discussion of the new black music was not restricted to “free jazz” players, noting that “the old rigid dichotomy between the so-called mainstream and avant garde has diminished and in some cases has disappeared altogether.” Thus he lauded the work of avant gardists Milford Graves, the Ayler brothers, Pharoah Sanders, Archie Shepp and Sun Ra, as well as more “mainstream” artists like Freddie Hubbard, James Spaulding, and Bobby Hutcherson. “Revolution in Sound” echoed the call by many musicians for a new name for the music, and articulated the need for African American control of more of the political economy of

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

jazz, including record production and writing about the music. Coltrane, through his pronounced spiritual emphasis, “consciously black” music, and setting up of Coltrane Records, was an exemplar of these Afrocentric values. This article remains one of the only contemporary accounts of the Black Arts idea in jazz to survey such a wide array of artists, even though its observations were largely restricted to the New York scene. It evokes the feeling of being written from within this Black Arts movement, with a clear perspective of history and the relationships between generations of musical practitioners of the black arts.

Spellman published another important essay in 1969 that is in some ways an illuminating contrast to “Revolution.” “Letter from Atlanta” was published in *The Cricket*, the short-lived magazine of jazz and poetry founded and edited by Baraka and Larry Neal (Spellman was also listed as editor). Although likewise concerned with the progress of black consciousness and self-determination among African American musical communities, the *Cricket* piece adopted an entirely different tone, unapologetically militant, profane and full of racial invective. Besides lamenting the aridity of the Atlanta musical scene (“Here, there is nothing that’s worth relating, musically... The clubs are mostly for the bougies, and their taste is worst than the devils’.”), the central questions were how to get the music to reach the people, and how had the connection been lost to start with? Here Charlie Parker is invoked less for revolutionary black art than as the figure who marked (due to a variety of economic factors) the shift of the predominant jazz audience from black to white. The trend of

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<sup>140</sup> “The Measure and Meaning of the Sixties—What Lies Ahead for Black Americans?” *Negro Digest* (November 1969): 80.

parasitical whites providing primary sites of black music-making generated the pull of musicians out of black communities to places like Manhattan's Lower East Side:

...that big pink cock of a Lower East Side is pulling at him like the tide, deathward, toward the corruption, competition with his brothers, drugs, and worse, a successful market of white people.

"[B]ringing it back home to the black community... is easily the most pressing problem the music faces," Spellman claimed, and various reputedly progressive interracial scenes did not provide the solution to the music's survival. Black musicians themselves had to "put together new record companies, community based music rooms, black publishing companies, etc." if their needs were to be met. Rooting themselves in black communities was crucial to the music's further development:

Some go home, like Milford Graves and Robin Kenyatta and Andrew Hill and you can hear their music growing for that reason: they play most often in the Black community, in sets designed to put black culture in its proper perspective: as the esthetic vanguard of the struggle.

I will say more about *The Cricket* later, and the degree to which the sentiments and rhetoric of "Letter From Atlanta" were representative. Here it is important to note that Spellman's writings reveal how a sensitive black intellectual deeply invested in jazz as an expression of black identity articulated connections between the music, black people, and the movement of ideas and organizational action. (note to self: also compare with *Black World* piece?) His career as a music critic ends with this piece; he began a long career as an arts administrator in the early 1970s and wrote very little thereafter.

## RON WELBURN

Ron Welburn, the fourth major African American critic to discuss, began his prolific career in music (and literary) criticism in the late 1960s, writing for a variety of publications, including *Liberator*, *Negro Digest/Black World*, and the *Syracuse New Times*. Most of his work for such publications was album and book reviews. He did write essays and interviews, but much of this lengthier work he would have to publish himself, after he helped found the important journal *The Grackle*. Welburn garnered enough respect within the jazz establishment to participate in Smithsonian Institute sponsored symposia, to write reviews regularly for *Jazz Times*, and to be appointed in 1980 as the director of the Institute of Jazz Studies Oral History Project, a post he held for four years. His reviews, particularly in the black press, were distinguished by an insistence on precise historical knowledge, the importance of a deeply informed black perspective of cultural expression, and advocated the need for black writers to go beyond nationalist rhetoric in discussing the music.

Writing at a slightly later period than Baraka and Spellman, Welburn was concerned with the same themes of exploitation, political economy, and the music's acceptance by African Americans, and also with the implications of the trend towards electrification in jazz, as spearheaded by Miles Davis in *Bitches Brew*. For Welburn, this new element and its promotion by the industry fit a pattern of conscious decisions by the powers that be to upstage and derail black artists' popularity. As the cool school was erected to supplant the bebop movement, and the bossa nova craze was encouraged to head off soul jazz, now electrification was being pushed by the industry, not only to attract white listeners but to aid in the creation of new white stars. He was optimistic,

however, that another “‘resurgence’ having more emphasis on Afro-rhythms and new unamplified instruments” from the likes of Archie Shepp, Wayne Shorter, Sun Ra, Sunny Murray, Jackie McLean, and Alice Coltrane (?) could yet take place.<sup>141</sup>

In a piece entitled “Black Music History,” published in the *Umum Black History Museum Newsletter* in June 1973, Welburn developed his theory of jazz history at further length. Ostensibly a review of a long forgotten screed on self-defeating attitudes of black people by one Chikuyo Alimayo, it is most concerned with the question of jazz’s relevance to “everyday” black people. (One of Alimayo’s main points was that it had none.) Welburn’s analysis was that the industry exerted tremendous impact on shaping musical tastes through simple access and exposure, and investigated the dichotomy of modern jazz and dancing. He reminded readers that much historic jazz was as much for listening pleasure as for dancing, and anecdotally challenged the undanceability of avant garde jazz. A telling point in this regard was his mention of the title tune of Pharoah Sanders’ *Summun Umyun Buknun*:

...even when something as infectious as Pharoah’s ‘Blind, Deaf and Dumb’ [sic] is put on at a party, our reaction is immediately and unconsciously: “oh, that’s jazz...can’t dance to that...let me talk to this person, get a drink, smoke some weed....” Hence, what we have to overcome is the game that has been played on us.<sup>142</sup>

Although written for an underground publication, this article is representative of Welburn's ongoing concerns about black culture, expressed in more accessible organs as

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<sup>141</sup> Welburn, Ron. “Miles Davis and Black Music in the 1970s.” *Liberator* (October 1970): 21, 23.

<sup>142</sup> Welburn, Ron. “Black Music History.” In *Umum Black History Museum Newsletter*. Vol. II, No. 8-9 (June 1973): 8.

well. That there was so much more to say that was not published by the mainstream was the main impetus driving him to create *The Grackle*, to be discussed below.

Outside of Gardner, Baraka, Spellman, and Welburn, there was little presence by African Americans in the mainstream jazz press. Kenny Dorham did several album reviews and a couple of longer pieces for *Down Beat* between 1965 and 1968. The magazine also published a few reviews by Bill Cole in the early 1970s. African Americans participated in jazz discourse through several significant biographies in the 1970s. Cole's works on Miles Davis (1974) and Coltrane (1976), and C.O. Simpkins' *Coltrane: A Biography* (1975) were works which continued the agenda of establishing and explicating an African American cultural context for jazz.<sup>143</sup> The latter two books did so through heroic presentations of the life of John Coltrane. Indeed, Coltraneology was a significant part of the Black Arts worldview; his iconic status in visual, literary, and musical media was ubiquitous, and beyond the scope of this piece to explore fully. Nonetheless, as is so visible in the institution of the Coltrane poem among Black Arts poets, these prose writers sought to not merely to celebrate but to define the man's contributions in specific and historical ways, wedding his creations to a continuum of cultural expression reaching back across the ocean and the centuries, a tradition of nurturing black musical geniuses, and the quest for self-determination exemplified by the civil rights movement. Thus Coltrane's comments about freedom and his desire to

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<sup>143</sup> Other important Coltrane-centered monographs from this period written by whites include J.C. Thomas' *Chasin' the Trane* (1976) and Frank Kofsky's *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music* (1970). Kofsky's tendentious tome presents the most explicit linkage of Coltrane and the new jazz to radical black nationalism. Despite this perspective, one shared in essence by many black intellectuals, I have found very little reference to it by black writers and musicians.

create an alternate political economy for the music (as seen in Coltrane Records and plans to open up a performance space) are highlighted in these narratives as part of the struggle for black self-determination. It may be true that, in the words of one Coltrane scholar, "Collectively these works are more hagiography than criticism."<sup>144</sup> But whatever their shortcomings, they purposively identify figures such as Cal Massey, Monk, Jimmy Heath, Sun Ra, Naima Coltrane and let them speak, and detail sites within black communities where performances and other important social exchanges take place. As such these works buttressed ideas about the strength of black cultural roots, and that liberatory impulse articulated by Baraka in *Blues People*, that marked the general discourse of black intellectuals in this period.

There are two remaining sections of this chapter. The first is to assess the music commentary contained in the leading black periodicals of the Black Arts years; the last is to take a close look at several attempts to establish an African American jazz journal.

### **BLACK PERIODICALS**

In looking at the major black journals of the 1960s – *SoulBook*, *Freedomways*, *Liberator*, *Negro Digest/Black World* – one sees that music and culture play varying degrees of significance in them. *Freedomways* had only incidental coverage, but did publish an essay by Max Roach in 1962 and one by Abbey Lincoln in 1966.<sup>145</sup> The outspoken Roach condemned the racist political economy of the music, while Lincoln contested images of black womanhood in the literature of jazz. *SoulBook*, started in Oakland in 1963, is a bit more interesting in this regard. Although, from what I can tell,

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<sup>144</sup> Washington, Salim. Personal correspondence, 3 May 2004.

this avowedly revolutionary magazine had only three articles on the music during the 1960s, its masthead proclaimed its primary concerns to be “jazz, economics, imperialism, and poetry.” This reflected a consensus among the staff that was widely held among young radical intellectuals of the time, that the music embodied, inspired, and expressed the militant quest for liberation which they believed in. According to one founding member of *SoulBook*, Ernest Allen, young radicals visiting like-minded folks in other towns would marvel at the commonality of musical taste – Coltrane, McLean, Blue Note – and identified the music with their larger political and cultural struggles. He also noted the impact of Baraka’s Blues People in galvanizing thinking on the centrality of the music to the movement, providing a theoretical basis for the feelings/ideas folks had about its importance, and encouraging them to emphasize it in their work.<sup>146</sup>

*Liberator*, which was started in 1961 in New York, was a different case altogether. Over the years, particularly between 1964 and 1968, many profiles and essays, and a few reviews, came forth in its pages. Much of this was done while Larry Neal was the arts and later associate editor. Neal himself, while not a prolific music commentator, was one of the most visible advocates of the centrality of black music to black culture, and the need for artists in other media to learn from what the advanced musicians were doing, in terms of communicating with the masses (as in soul/r&b) as well as mining elemental black aesthetic possibilities (the jazz of Coltrane, Ayler, Graves et al). These notions infuse his writings, which tend to focus more on literature than musicians. He contributed interviews with Shepp and Graves (in an article called

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<sup>145</sup> Roach, Max. “Jazz.” *Freedomways* (Spring 1962): 173-176. And Lincoln, Abbey. “Negro Woman in Literature.” *Freedomways* (First Quarter 1966): 11-13.

“Black Revolution in Music”) in which political economy, racism, black nationalism, and the need for African American cultural institutions and organizations were stressed. Other writers contributed important and trenchant pieces to the magazine, particularly one Charlie Russell, whose journalism was concerned with African American cultural context and community. In pieces like “Has Jazz Lost Its Roots,” which focuses on Cecil Taylor, he grappled with an ongoing concern of black writers, which was the migration of venues out of black communities, and the small numbers of black people who attended such shows. In addition to an alienated political economy, Russell felt that the deep emotional honesty that the (new) musicians sought in their art “reveal[ed] truths about us and our lives that most of us would just as soon not be made aware of.” The magazine championed “new thing” musicians, almost exclusively, and consistently interpreted it as a source/force of opposition to racist and capitalist values.

*Negro Digest/Black World* was the other black magazine to give significant space to the coverage of black music. Most of it came from the *On Record* review column, which was written over the years by various contributors, among them editor Hoyt Fuller, David Llorens, and Carole A Parks. It usually consisted of several short reviews, while occasionally a column would be taken up with one performer or record. The column appeared intermittently during the 1960s, and covered jazz, cabaret, vocalists, spoken word, and some pop music. When Parks came aboard in 1970, the column’s frequency increased, as Fuller delegated this area to her. Jazz became the dominant subject matter, with poetry albums quite visible. She was quite proud of the space they gave to black independent efforts and companies such as the AACM, Tribe

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<sup>146</sup> Allen, Ernest. Telephone interview, 1 February 2004.

Records, and Strata East. According to Parks, one determinant in the coverage was how much product the companies were sending to *Black World*. Only in a few cases did she solicit material. Other considerations were available space in the issue, and time for her to listen to and write up the records.<sup>147</sup> The magazine attracted the attention of other writers who began to send in lengthier reviews, such as Ron Welburn and Roger Riggins, who would found *The Grackle* in 1975. The review column represented the vast majority of the magazine's music journalism, in this sense playing an advocacy role for what they felt were important recordings of black cultural expression.. Although outside of the Welburn and Riggins pieces there was no criticism as such, *Black World* played a significant role in defining/supporting a distinct black perspective on the use and value of the music. The magazine had far more developed resources to analyze poetry, drama, and fiction, and did so. The magazine's recorded music appeared in the context of Fuller's Pan African liberationist independent philosophy. It did not appear to be in conversation with the jazz press to any degree, in the same way that it challenged white "experts" on African American literature. Whereas Fuller and other commentators in *Black World's* pages often criticized statements and authorities from mainstream press and publishing regarding black writers, there was no equivalent critical gaze at mainstream coverage of jazz and black music.

The other black periodical whose music coverage must be mentioned here is *Black News*, produced in Brooklyn (though with national distribution) from late 1969 through the early 1980s. In its early years the paper, which was affiliated with the important cultural nationalist organization The East, ran a few interesting

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<sup>147</sup> Parks, Carole A. Telephone interview, 12 April 2004.

profiles/interviews of Lee Morgan, Doug Carn, Abbey Lincoln, and Phil Cohran. Its significance to this discussion lies primarily in the coverage and advertising for the organization's fertile Black Arts jazz concert policy. Through 1975, *Black News* announced upcoming East performances by Pharoah Sanders, Doug and Jean Carn, Gary Bartz, Sam Rivers, Sun Ra, and so many others, a constellation of major acts strongly identified with what Spellman called a "consciously black"<sup>148</sup> aesthetic in music. There was certainly no criticism as such in the paper, no reviews; there were sometimes brief recommendations to "check out" particular recordings. There were also occasional brief exuberant remarks about recent concerts. In the exposure of the organization's ongoing concert series, often via full page illustrated flyers often found on the back cover, *Black News* made an explicit endorsement of these sounds as direct expressions/manifestations of the project to regenerate philosophical and institutional sources of strength in black communities. It broadcast the centrality of this music to the project and as such endorsed these musicians as producers of "positive black-loving experiences."

### BLACK JAZZ JOURNALS

It remains for us to discuss three attempts by African American writers to establish organs of jazz criticism/commentary. The first, *The Cricket*, was established in 1968 in Newark by Jihad Productions. Amiri Baraka, Larry Neal, and A.B. Spellman, who were listed as editors; Cecil Taylor, Milford Graves, and Sun Ra were listed as advisors. This group was able to produce four issues over the next two years, which contained reviews of records, poetry, editorials, and interviews. It was an avowedly

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<sup>148</sup> Spellman, "Revolution in Sound," 82.

black nationalist publication, whose first editorial broadcast its purpose to provide black leadership in defining and discussing black music. Essays by Graves, Ra, and Mtume were significant features, and all of them echoed the call for African American control of the black musical enterprise. Horace Tapscott's first national publicity came in a 1969 interview Stanley Crouch published in *The Cricket*; in it he advocates black musicians organizing for power, and the need to stay connected to black communities. The reviews are varied. Neal does a poetic tribute to Pharoah Sanders' *Karma* LP, while humorously terse dismissals of albums by Oliver Nelson and Lou Donaldson also appear. An aesthetic vision does emerge from these, though, one that privileges "outside" sounds, black nationalist aspects of the music, and derides facile attempts to incorporate r&b and rock rhythms. Neal's lengthy didactic pan of Albert Ayler's controversial 1968 *New Grass*, which contained many bad pop-rock vocal numbers, is a case in point

Like it's not too cool to get to the Rolling Stones or The Grateful Dead to learn things you old man can teach you...I know what the Brother is trying to do. But his procedure is fucked up.<sup>149</sup>

(Although perhaps it should be mentioned that one does not necessarily have to be an anti-popular music snob to be thoroughly disenchanted with *New Grass*.) One could call it a heavily politicized journal of music coverage. Unrestrained by the eyes of advertisers or liberals, writers were free to give vent to sentiments and vocabulary not popular with mainstream press. Thus, Spellman, normally a measured essayist, could write in "Letter from Atlanta" about "ofays, whiteys, greys" deriding the interracial NY

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<sup>149</sup> Neal, Larry. "New Grass/Albert Ayler." *Cricket*, No. 4 (1969): 38.

downtown scene (“practically the only brothers who came had tremendous hardons that throbbed so hard after white pussy that all other purpose was negated”).<sup>150</sup> Without question this magazine was wedded to a larger project of creating independent black institutions and waging political and cultural struggle in an aggressive and confrontational manner. Certainly each of the editors had long term personal commitment to such goals. Jihad Productions is an entity about which there is not much public information, but we know it was led by Neal and Baraka. It produced records (*Sonny’s Time, Soul and Madness*) and other literature, and was affiliated with Spirit House in Newark, Baraka’s cultural nationalist group.

Two individuals whose work appeared in *The Cricket*, Roger Riggins and James Stewart, helped co-found *The Grackle* in 1976. Ron Welburn was the central figure in this second attempt to establish an organ of African American jazz criticism. It was based in New York, where Welburn was a graduate student and instructor during the time. *The Grackle* was produced irregularly, its fifth and final issue appearing in 1979. Although oriented towards free jazz, coverage extended to Latin music, an interview with Ralph Ellison, a Welburn piece on Eddie Jefferson and Joe Lee Wilson. In addition, the magazine did not limit its discussion of jazz to African American players: the third issue (autumn 1976) had a cover photo of Dave Holland and featured articles on Steve Lacy and Paul Bley. Nonetheless, it maintained a strict policy of publishing work by people of African descent. Welburn recounted being asked by several white writers to be published in *The Grackle*; his consistent response was that the purpose of the magazine was to provide an outlet for black writers on jazz, whose work was not

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<sup>150</sup> Spellman, A.B. “Letter from Atlanta,” *The Cricket*, No. 3 (1969): 5.

being accepted by established jazz magazines.<sup>151</sup> “The editors are responding to the frustrations of getting reviews and essays on music and culture published,” the editor’s statement on the first page of the first issue noted. “*The Grackle* may be of a slightly different hue than [a list of prominent publications]:” it was on the scene “offering another point of view on Improvisational Music.”<sup>152</sup>

Like *The Cricket*, *The Grackle* (“The grackle is a majestic blackbird and Black Music is majestic music”) was a low budget production, with hand-drawn graphics and mimeographed typescript. (Much of the production was done surreptitiously, after hours, at the office of one of the editor’s lady friends who worked a secretarial job.) There was never any advertising or financial underpinning for the enterprise; it was produced with whatever personal resources Welburn could muster. Coming into being after the Black Arts/Black Power movements had crested, *The Grackle* struck a significantly different political tone than its predecessor. There was no heated rhetoric of the ofay and the beast, no explicit wedding of the music to a larger goal of black liberation. Yet concern with the larger political and cultural implications of art was central to the project, as seen in the editor’s statement from the third issue: “We prefer review essays that develop points of view regarding American culture history, Afro-American nationalism, and cultural pluralism.”<sup>153</sup> There was very little poetry in its pages, despite Welburn’s formidable reputation and prolific output in this area. Illustrative of this different political stance is the critic’s symposium that appeared in the final issue. Although Welburn was disappointed by the paucity of response his

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<sup>151</sup> Welburn, Ron. Interview, 12 April 2004.

<sup>152</sup> “Editor’s Statement.” *The Grackle*, No.1 (1976):1

questionnaire elicited, an interesting exchange among several critics of color (including Lorenzo Thomas, Vernon Gibbs, Max Salazar, Henry Rock, and the editors) ensued. The questions revealed Welburn's concerns with a purer aesthetic standard of judgment, and were implicitly critical of much prior black jazz commentary, calling for a professionalization of sorts. The three major issues were:

- “1. What level of musical knowledge or skill should we demand of ourselves and each other?...
3. What particular responsibilities, if any, do we have as commentators of Black/Latin music and its derivatives?
6. ...Isn't it time we moved away from superficial sociology to serious musicological and socio-aesthetic matters about particular artists and periods?”

In calling for criticism grounded in musicology and free of political rhetoric, Welburn clearly was advancing an agenda somewhat at odds with Baraka's late 1960s program. Despite the absence of racial polemic, its basic thrust continued the quest for African American self-definition and independent institution-building of which *The Cricket* was a manifestation.

The last publication that belongs to this discussion is *Bebop and Beyond*, published in Los Angeles between 1983 and 1988. Although these years are beyond the scope of the dissertation's overall time period, the magazine's importance as another example of African American organ of jazz commentary mandates its inclusion. It was the first project of a group of African American male jazz aficionados who formed the Creative Music Collective. This group was led by Abdul Qawi (then known as Reginald Anderson), whose parents were enjoyed jazz and kindled his interest in the music from an early age. Inspired by Max Roach's words to him that “brothers need to start doing

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<sup>153</sup> *The Grackle*, Vol. 1, No. 3.

more for the music.” Qawi got together with five friends to start a magazine that would promote black jazz musicians and “inform our community and [other] communities about who we were.” Although the sources of direction he cited included *Black Scholar* magazine, the writings of Haki Madhubuti and Amiri Baraka, Qawi had no knowledge of *The Cricket* or *The Grackle* when they started *Bebop and Beyond*. But the impetus for it was the same:

I was tired of the way they [white writers and entrepreneurs] were trying to handle our culture... It was a magazine to promote black people. They had *Down Beat*, you had a venue for white musicians to be promoted. They had *Coda*, a lot of magazines...

Though they did not come to fruition, his plans for the Creative Music Collective included concert production, recording, and the acquisition of a performance venue. Unlike its predecessors, *Bebop* was a professionally produced magazine, with photo, print and layout quality quite high. The six men committed themselves to monthly dues of \$119 to finance the project, and advertising supplied much needed supplemental revenue.<sup>154</sup> In the issues available to me, music oriented vendors – record stores, magazines, musicians, radio stations, and related entrepreneurs – seem to predominate. Interviews, reviews, and essays comprise the bulk of the contents. The range is intimated by the title, as figures as varied as Johnny Griffin, Roy Porter, Clora Bryant, Amina Myers, John Gilmore, and Henry Threadgill grace its pages. Although Scott Yanow contributed a number of record reviews, the great mass of content appears to have been written by African Americans. The concerns raised in editorials and interviews reflect the continuing concern with self-definition and self-determination –

the importance of black ownership of the political economy of the music is sounded repeatedly. Although some of the coverage has a California angle, this was a magazine for national distribution and interest. This discussion of African American writing on jazz shows that there has been an ongoing concern by black intellectuals to properly place the music in its cultural context. Consistent concerns about the ownership of the political economy of jazz were expressed, and attempts to create independent organs arose in each decade from the 1960s through the 1980s. Although within this array of voices there was much diversity, the common desire to contest white hegemony in the definition and presentation of the music is evident. This desire is also evident in the activities of working-class African Americans, who sought to provide opportunities to preserve the music's presence within black communities. These efforts confirm that not just musicians saw jazz as a key expression and weapon of the Black Arts imperative. This vision was one shared by intellectuals, activists, and community members.

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<sup>154</sup> Qawi, Abdul. Telephone interview, 12 June 2004.

## CHAPTER 4

### AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY JAZZ SPONSORSHIP DURING THE BLACK ARTS ERA

#### INTRODUCTION

What access to live jazz performance do residents of black communities have?

In jazz history we see a shift of the jazz scene across neighborhoods in most cities across the years. New York City's well-known example saw the music move from Harlem's heyday in the 1920s-1930s to the 52<sup>nd</sup> street scene of the 1940s, down to Greenwich Village in the 1950s-1960s. This pattern of venues migrating out of black communities is seen in other towns as well, and became of particular concern to various individuals in the 1960s. In this period musicians began to articulate their great dissatisfaction with the conditions under which they tried to make music and a living: complaints about insensitivity toward the art, financial exploitation, poor accommodations, and occasionally, the lack of black audience members. Fans complained about prices, location, the constant reminders that in Archie Shepp's inimitable words it was "black music, white business." Also coming to the fore was a shift in attitude about culture and identity among many African Americans, one that asserted pride in and a sense of ownership of "black culture."

For many intellectuals and musicians, jazz came to be considered a valuable community resource whose existence was imperiled by white interpretative and entrepreneurial monopolies. The imperative of the Black Arts movement—who will control and define black culture?—deeply influenced men and women who saw the

music as providing some real form of spiritual and cultural sustenance. In various ways and in various formations in various towns such people sought to establish apparatuses through which they could promote and present jazz. Not all sought to do so exclusively or primarily for black audiences: some did. Some activities had as primary goal supporting the musicians, so many of whom were clearly not thriving, and to present their art in a more meaningful context; some sought primarily to set up a profit-making business based on the music; some sought as principle goal to enlighten and educate the black community, so much of which had not been exposed to but (in their view) desperately needed to hear the important aesthetic creations of their fellow African Americans.

The context for the activities to be described herein is multiple. One is the state of jazz political economy, the perceived "death of jazz" so often debated in the jazz press then, the deterioration of urban infrastructures and the suburban population migrations which undercut city maintenance and development, leading to the marginalization of much small business and urban nightlife, and the Black Arts ideal of institution-building which motivated so many African American intellectuals and activists. During this period hundreds of black theater companies sprang up across the country. There were new writer's groups, musician organizations, artist collectives, independent schools, journals, and presses, committed to the idea that through organization and collective action progressive black cultural expression could be brought to "the people" for their communal benefit. (Of course, in the case of sponsors of more challenging jazz, results in the area of enthusiastic community response were decidedly mixed.)

An important long-running grassroots project to sponsor jazz was the Left Bank Jazz Society in Baltimore Maryland. Active from 1964 into the late 1990s, this mostly African American group of citizens brought national acts to Baltimore every Sunday afternoon, in its heyday – 1967 to 1984 - to a club called The Famous Door on Charles Street. Although there were jazz clubs in Baltimore, the Left Bank quickly became and remained the most visible jazz scene in the city. Patrons could bring food and drinks as there was no liquor license, but one could buy soul food dinners that are apparently remembered as being quite tasty. They do not seem to have done much with obtaining grant money, certainly not in the early years. They brought a wide range of jazz acts to Baltimore – Count Basie, Charles Mingus, Dizzy Gillespie, Woody Herman, Don Ellis, the Ones-Lewis Orchestra, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Herbie Hancock, Gary Bartz, Sun Ra, Coltrane among them. Accounts of those Sundays at the Famous indicate that they were often crowded, so for much of the time the concerts seem largely to have paid for themselves. The rhetoric of the Left Bank stressed an open atmosphere and conviviality, in other words, white folks were welcome to come on down. Jazz was seen as a builder of multiracial community and communication was implicit in their work. Vernon Welsh, a white guitarist, helped found the Left Bank and was one of its most visible members.<sup>155</sup>

In keeping with overall trends in black America, though, as the 1960s progressed more nationalistic formations arose. Musicians are themselves a part of this ethos, and folks who saw them as leaders like Jitu Weusi saw these concerns as a serious community issue. The need for alternatives to bars for the presentation of this black

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<sup>155</sup> Dilts, James. “The Closet Tapes.” *Baltimore City Paper*, 4-10 October 2000.

consciousness-raising art form. The creation of alcohol-free, family-friendly, wholesome context was a desire of some musicians as well as fans of the music.

Some of these later initiatives include the Afro Brothers in Philadelphia who didn't have a space, but sponsored concerts. Jim Harrison of New York with the Jackie McLean Fan Club and later Jim Harrison Promotions presented artists in Harlem and elsewhere. Club Jest Us in Brooklyn, Kimako's in Harlem, Rafiki's, Affro Arts Theatre in Chicago are representative of the volume of efforts at creating black community institutions that would both educate and enrich black communities through the arts, and specifically jazz, and provide opportunities for jazz artists to play for black people. Most of these venues and organizations are creatures of their era, and did not long survive the 1970s. There was very little outside funding, mostly a lot of idealism, and they found like so many alternative cultural spaces through the years have that depending on the public's ticket dollars would not sustain these independent black institutions.

The centerpiece in this discussion of Black Arts era black community presentation of the music has to be the weekly concerts held at The East, a cultural nationalist collective in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, NY. From New Years Eve, 1969 through 1975, this organization mounted weekly concerts of (primarily) jazz artists whose music was deemed to be consciousness-raising. Independent venue, non-alcoholic, black nationalist context and invocations, supportive of political struggles. New York locale provided essential access to large body of musicians; only in New York could such a lineup have happened, as no travel or lodging involved. The venue won support of some musicians because of its activist aspect. Important black nationalist musical statements were recorded there or marketed as such.

As a site for the production of Black Arts jazz that while local was of national significance, The East during this period was nonpareil. This will show a crucial link between musical production and black “political” activism. For many younger activists, the music was seen as a direct analogue of political struggles.

In order to properly contextualize this important site of Black Arts jazz, it is necessary to provide background on the organization(s) that brought it into being, the African American Students Association (ASA) and the African American Teachers Association (ATA). This entails engaging the divergent approaches to quality education put forth by activists in post-Brown vs. Board New York, a contest between integration and community control. As Podair points out, the bodies which led the fight for education for black youth in the mid-1960s saw predominantly black schools as inherently unequal, following the reasoning of the Warren Court (and key witnesses such as Kenneth Clark).

The idea that black children—no matter where they actually lived—needed to attend school with white children in order to receive equal educational opportunity, became a central tenet of civil rights activists in New York[.]<sup>156</sup>

Campaigns to integrate better funded white schools led by Rev. Milton Galamison in the early mid 1960s had made public education a prime theater of the battle for racial equality. The city responded with voluntary busing programs for black parents, which fell far short of activists’ goals for integration. In response to the push for integration, and the NYC BOE mild pupil redistribution efforts, the Parents and Taxpayers Association, a group dedicated to preserving the de facto segregated status quo, was

organized in 1963, and won the support of many white parents around the city. It was this group which articulated the issue that would soon be associated with black and Puerto Rican parents—community control of schools. Against a fearsome bureaucracy, PAT staged rallies and petitions to resist “forced busing.” This organization’s events easily exceeded Galamison’s EQUAL organization in attracting visible support, and the city acquiesced in pulling back any mandated outsourcing of white kids. By 1966 the dream of integrated schools was at a dead end. Educational activists had to find another way to improve their children’s chances for education. The struggle over Intermediate School 201 would illustrate the changed mood and direction.

The BOE’s original idea for IS 201 was to build a school in the borderlands of a white and black neighborhood, to be attended by local children, thus effecting some measure of integration without the objectionable busing of whites. However, the school failed to attract white students, and the board eventually built the school on 127<sup>th</sup> St. in Harlem. (Some parents objected to the prison-like appearance of the new building.) But parents and activists were quite upset when in spring 1966 a white man was appointed to be the new school’s principal. Demonstrators from several organizations (CORE, SNCC, OAU, EQUAL, ATA were some) picketed outside IS 201 on opening day in September. Their goals were not only a black principal but a “community-controlled school.” Cultural nationalism was breaking out. Although this battle was lost, the momentum towards advocacy of black control of black institutions was only heightened.

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<sup>156</sup> Podair, Jerald. *The Strike That Changed New York*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. Page 22.

The ATA, founded as the Negro Teachers Association in 1964 by educators dissatisfied with United Federation of Teachers' (UFT) lack of support for desegregation efforts in the city, became more radicalized. (As the UFT emerged as the bitter enemy of community control in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, ATA members withdrew their UFT memberships and affiliation.) ATA, led by Al Vann and Leslie Campbell (who would become Big Black and later Jitu Weusi) would become a leading force in the community control campaign, and as ideological influences among black students and teachers. The Ocean Hill-Brownsville community control district (begun with the 1967-68 school year) waged its fiery battle with the UFT, which raged most fiercely during the fall of 1968 with a prolonged UFT strike. The BOE sided with the teachers, and ultimately dissolved the experiment at community control. Though the defeat of the local board was radicalizing, student activism had already been in high gear, and conflict with teachers and administrators was common. Many were being tossed from school for perceived disruptive behavior, and their efforts to learn and promote black history and culture were often frustrated. In December 1967 students from Brooklyn and Manhattan met to "build an organization for the black youth of tomorrow."<sup>157</sup> This was the beginning of the ASA, the organization that created The East. The ATA was the nurturer if not parent of the ASA, lending office space, printing and other resources to the fledgling youth group. The educational component of The East/ASA began with the ATA Evening School of Knowledge in the fall of 1969, held at the ATA offices. When the ASA started its educational activities (with evening classes for its members and

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<sup>157</sup> "The New Breed of Black Youth." *Black News*, Vol. 1, No. 25 (10 December 1970): 2.

others who had left the public schools, as well as the beginning of the Uhuru Sasa Shule), many of the instructors were committed ATA members. Without ATA's existence and strong almost unconditional support, neither the ASA or its progeny The East are imaginable as viable entities.

The ASA drew its membership from junior high and high schools throughout the city, though Brooklyn members would soon predominate. In building this "black youth organization of tomorrow," they saw themselves as mobilizing for battle with the city over education and culture. There were many militant high school student organizations across the city and country in the late 1960s, and they tended to be racially distinct. The white groups, which far outnumbered black ones, tended to have anti-war activities as their first agenda item. The demands of militant black groups, which appeared in predominantly black schools as well as those with white majorities, centered on curriculum changes (black history and culture), cultural programs and expressions (such as flying the "liberation flag"), and the removal of racist teachers.<sup>158</sup> The ASA would be very active in school protests in 1968 and 1969, mobilizing a series of student strikes and protests at various schools. But their first planned event was a memorial program for Malcolm X, to be held at I.S. 201 in February 1968. The event, co-sponsored by the ATA and the I.S. 201 governing board, engendered much controversy, much of it focused on remarks by invited speakers Herman Ferguson and Amiri Baraka. Ferguson's calls for African Americans to obtain weapons and practice self-defense, and Baraka's Spirit House Movers and Players' performance that prophesied death for opponents of

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<sup>158</sup> Pileggi, Nicholas. "Revolutionaries Who Have to Be Home by 7:30." *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 16 March 1969, 119.

the black liberation struggle, were highlighted to illustrate the unreasonableness of the proceedings.<sup>159</sup> Others participating included James Baldwin, Betty Shabazz, and Conrad Lynn. Weusi, who at the time was teaching at J.S. 35 in Brooklyn, was reprimanded and transferred (to J.S. 271, flashpoint in the community control struggle!) as punishment for escorting some children from his school to the program. Annual Malcolm X memorials in February and May remained an ongoing staple of ASA and The East throughout their existence.

In the spring of 1968 ASA targeted Boys High in Brooklyn, demanding the firing of the principal and a black male as his replacement, and a new curriculum. They considered themselves successful when the principal resigned. They were a major force in organizing the citywide student strikes in the November-December 1968 to end the extended school sessions won by UFT teachers as part of the settlement of their strike. Their "Spring Offensive" of 1969, massive resistance in the form of vandalism, rallies, battles with police, disruptions of classes and school activities was designed in support of "The 15 Demands" of the African-American Students Association. Among these were an end to police in the schools, automatic suspension of students, the busing of black students to schools in "hostile communities," the General Course of Study, and locked school exits. They also demanded the birthdays of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King recognized as school holidays, improved teacher qualifications, relevant curriculum, and student participation in school affairs.<sup>160</sup> They took credit for closing

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<sup>159</sup> Buder, Leonard. "Negroes Urged at I.S. 201 To Arm for 'Self-Defense.'" *New York Times*. 22 February 1968, 1.

<sup>160</sup> "New Breed," 4.

“25 schools for two days or more,” but the 15 demands remained unmet. Fall 1969 saw ASA battling in Franklin Lane High School, which already had a long history of racial discord. A seventy percent black and Puerto Rican school located in an white conservative neighborhood, Lane was a battleground for teachers and parents discomfited by the large black presence. In turn the students of color felt tremendous pressure and hostility, and attempted to stand their ground and demand responsiveness to their needs. The precipitating event to the fall clashes between students, police, and the administration was the refusal to allow students to fly the liberation flag in the classroom where they studied African culture. The students’ sit-in to protect the flag from being removed the third day set off what one reporter called the familiar “cycle of confrontation, suspensions and riots.”<sup>161</sup>

Meanwhile, the members of ASA moved to establish a space for organizational and cultural activities outside of the school context. Many members were no longer attending school, and the adults working with them guided their energies in the direction of creating a community institution that could disseminate the important life-giving cultural and political information. With monies raised through donations from members (those working summer jobs) and supporters (adults such as Weusi *and others?*), ASA had established a bail fund for the hundreds of members arrested in clashes with police. In the summer of 1969 this fund was used to lease a former art gallery at 10 Claver Place, just off Fulton St. The second half of the year saw the massive project of cleaning and remodeling the building take place, all with voluntary labor, all done by ASA

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<sup>161</sup> Lelyveld, Joseph. “City High Schools Affected.” *New York Times*, 9 February 1970, 1.

members and community folks who donated much needed carpentry, electric, and plumbing skills. The group began using the building for meetings in October, and began publishing the important monthly newspaper *Black News* there that same month. In November Weusi resigned from the public school system and announced the formation of Uhuru Sasa School, to commence February 1970 serving grades 6-12, and accepting children of all ages come September. At the end of December 1969, The East Cultural and Educational Center opened. The centerpiece of its projected (and proven) appeal was the Black Experience in Sound, weekend concerts by major and local musicians, presented along with poetic, dramatic, and/or oratorical performances. Evening classes and workshops on varied topics including academics, African dance, photography brought people to the place. Although Weusi has been quoted as saying about the beginning of The East, “we knew that we wanted an institution, but we weren’t clear about what type and form... and what it was going to be about,”<sup>162</sup> the group seems to have quickly come up with a relatively coherent program of cultural and educational activity. In addition, The East and *Black News* served as central sites for the promotion of other nationalist cultural efforts in Brooklyn, if not New York. The extent to which these forces accentuated jazz music as a key aspect of progressive African American cultural is noteworthy.

Before returning to the Black Experience in Sound, the core of our tale, it is useful to sketch more fully the ongoing activities, and evolution, of The East. The ASA continued to agitate and recruit in the schools through at least 1970, but the major focus

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<sup>162</sup> Niamke, Kalonji. “The Legacy of ‘The East’: An Analysis of a Case Experience in Independent Institution and Nationalist Building, 1969-1986.” Master’s Thesis, Cornell

of the organization was The East. Leading figures such as Adeyemi Bandele put their energies into building the institution. As a result the ASA as such ceased being an entity by 1973. The East claimed to be nonsectarian, open to participation by black folks of any and all religions and persuasions, as long as they supported the work. As The East family concept developed in 1970 and beyond, an identity based in certain beliefs as well as sacrifices and commitments emerged. The East family was defined as those who worked on the various projects. This East family identity was sufficiently distinct that it dissociated itself from a series of *Black News* editorials highly critical of black nationalist practices (unity with Democratic party politicians, mysticism, Afro-African attire) in 1972. (These editorials were written by Don Blackman, regular political commentator for the paper, and Jim Williams, the paper's editor from its inception. This conflict would end in February 1973 ouster of Williams.) By the time of the ouster, The East had joined the Congress of African People, and had accepted the tenets of Kwaaida as guiding principles. The claim of non-sectarianism is not tenable at this point in the group's history.

The visibility of The East was maintained by several distinct operations, which collectively represented the nation-building project: the school, the concerts, and the evening classes and programs. The catering business developed out of the shows and served other independent schools and groups. In some veteran's accounts, the concerts loom as the heart of the enterprise.

Compared to other nationalist and radical formations such as BARTS, CFUN (Committee for a Unified Newark), the US organization, the Nation of Islam, Republic

of New Africa, and the Black Panther Party, the importance of jazz at The East was notable. With the exception of the short-lived BARTS, in none of these formations was music especially jazz so central to their vision/mission. It is clear that Baraka employed music in the CFUN project a great deal. He was the group's Imamu and only celebrity, and he performed his poetry in person and on record with musical accompaniment. The *Cricket* #4 (1969) makes mention of musical performances at CFUN meetings by the likes of Sun Ra, Donald Ayler, Sunny Murray, and Pharoah Sanders and Leon Thomas.<sup>163</sup> These appearances were part of a CFUN series called "Black Music in Evolution." It is yet unclear how often such performances took place in CFUN's history. Of these groups, The East resembled most closely in certain aspects US, NOI and BPP. Each required a faith and full commitment to sacrifice. Even though The East preached non-sectarianism, one did have to share a certain belief system to fit in. Long before the group officially became a Kawaida organization in 1972, they extolled as their philosophy the seven principles of blackness, later to be known as the Nguzo Saba. The generation and adoption of East attire contributed to a sense of apartness and moral superiority. In this sense the group shared characteristics with the NOI. Although Louis the Charmer Farrakhan did record the legendary calypso "A White Man's Heaven is a Black Man's Hell" in the early 1960s, and the song was a favorite at Muslim-owned restaurants, music played almost no role in NOI daily life or ritual, and in fact was largely frowned upon as ungodly and unserious activity. Like the BPP and US, The East collective had communal living and economics for the hardcore members, and was composed largely of youth, primarily teenagers and those just beyond. These groups

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<sup>163</sup> "Gossip." *Cricket*, No. 4 (1969): 62-64.

each had cultural components. US had its boot-dance troop, routines taught by US supporters and South African expatriates Letta Mbulu and Caiphus Semenya. The Panthers had a soul-singing group called "The Lumpen," which performed both original material and "revolutionary" versions of popular songs. Each had regular "Soul Sessions," group gatherings wherein a mixture of education, dialogue, and cultural expressions would take place. Usually the music involved would be vocally oriented and of course didactic.

One very different aspect of The East's music program was that it was a moneymaker for the organization, its primary source of income for the first few years of its existence. Such a situation could only happen in the New York environs, the major entertainment capital of the U.S. and thus home to and a regular stop of great numbers of world-class musicians.

### **BROOKLYN JAZZ SCENE**

The Black Experience in Sound is but one part of a much larger story of jazz in Brooklyn. Although not nearly as famous as Harlem as a jazz hot spot, the black community of Brooklyn, like in many cities, featured a lively postwar jazz scene, remnants of which carried on into the 1970s. (Indeed, through the Central Brooklyn Jazz Consortium, an alliance of activists, entrepreneurs, and churches, African Americans are reclaiming and building upon this legacy of strong local jazz presentation.) Many important musicians were from Brooklyn and/or made it their home. Randy Weston (b 1926) and Max Roach (b 1924) were two Brooklynites whose interests in cultural and economic self-determination, manifested through their music and other activities, lent the scene much flavor. Mongo Santamaria, Cecil Payne, Wynton Kelly, Duke Jordan,

and Ray Copeland were other name musicians who grew up and worked there during mid-century.<sup>164</sup> There were many places where jazz could be heard in Brooklyn:

Bars with music policies were the norm from Brownville to Crown Heights, but the venues that one might consider the jewels of the Brooklyn crown were located along a majestic stretch of Fulton Street that runs from the top of Clinton Hill through the now much-deteriorated Bedford-Stuyvesant section.<sup>165</sup>

Among the Brooklyn jazz joints of legend were Putnam Central, the Continental, the Blue Coronet, the Elks Ballroom, and Club La Marchal, made famous by the Freddie Hubbard vs. Lee Morgan trumpet duels recorded there on the 1965 Hubbard “The Night of the Cookers” (v 1 & 2). That concert was but one of a series set up by Club Jest Us, a Brooklyn-based group of wives of jazz musicians. The intersection of Fulton and Nostrand, a few blocks from where The East would set up shop, was the site of several spots, including the Wagon Wheel, Bickford’s, and the Baby Grand. Once again, Freddie Hubbard would immortalize this corner with his tune “Fulton and Nostrand.” The list of jazz giants who performed regularly at these and other Brooklyn spots, according to lore, include Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Coleman Hawkins, Miles Davis, and Sonny Stitt. According to Weusi, in the 1960s the ATA had their own special room at the Blue Coronet, which was owned by the Bey brothers.

This vibrant musical atmosphere, flourishing in the 1950s into the 1960s, made a lasting impact on the activists who created The East. Mensah Wali, who coordinated the Black Experience in Sound for its first four years, moved at age 14 to Brooklyn from

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<sup>164</sup> Randy Weston interview in *Coda* (February 1978): 4.

<sup>165</sup> Williams, K. Leander. “Brooklyn, New York.” In *Lost Jazz Shrines (The Lost Shrines Project, 1998)*: 12-16.

Panama in 1956 and recalled that “when I walked out of my house, I could walk ten blocks in any direction and hear live music, jazz. So this was the music of the people.”<sup>166</sup> His memories also include attending dances as a high school student where the bands of Art Blakey, Max Roach, and Cal Tjader (featuring Willie Bobo and Mongo Santamaria) played. Jitu Weusi likewise recalls exposure to a vibrant Brooklyn jazz scene through his parent while growing up in Bed-Stuy in the 1950s. The prevalence of the music, the stature of certain musicians as cultural heroes, and its presence as a cross-generational popular music within the Brooklyn African American community during the 1950s deeply influenced the decisions these men would later take in charting The East’s cultural programming.

There was apparently little dissent among the founders of The East that jazz would be the centerpiece of the weekly cultural offerings they envisioned. These sessions were conceived of as both nation-building cultural activities and as an economic enterprise, a primary source of funds for The East endeavor. Although in retrospect it may seem improbable that black activists in 1970 could conceive of jazz performances in Bed-Stuy as a profitable enterprise, especially with a no-whites-allowed audience policy, it made much sense to Mensah Wali:

First of all, we weren’t that far away from jazz being the music of the people... It was all in the neighborhood, it was all around you [in the 1960s], so in terms of us relating to the music and having decided to use it and feeling we could use it for a fundraiser, it wasn’t that far away. The other part of that equation was it didn’t cost that much... These guys were working for \$500 for two nights, for a band of four to six guys.”

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<sup>166</sup> Wali, Mensah. Telephone interview, 21 July 2004.

Wali's point about prices is well-taken. Certainly in 1970 all were aware that soul/r&b music was by far the most popular music among black people, but The East founders would have quickly realized that the name performers in this field were far beyond their financial and infrastructural means to present. Like many cultural nationalists of the period, they were quite ambivalent and occasionally hostile to contemporary black popular music. Although certain performers such as Aretha, James Brown, Curtis Mayfield had to be praised for powerful (black-) life-affirming work, much soul was held to promote false values inimical to black liberation, such as materialism, integration, hedonism. Jazz on the other hand had come to be the site of many cultural nationalists' most profound expressions of a progressive black consciousness. Weusi reflects that "we were being driven by the music at that time."<sup>167</sup> For The East founders, it was not only their favorite music, it was held to have a universal spiritual power, and equally important, several of them had friendships with many in the jazz community. The Black Experience in Sound was established and greatly maintained by these personal connections.

During the years that The East concerts ran, not much of the old Brooklyn bar and ballroom scene remained. Wali recalled that the Baby Grand and the Blue Coronet were still on the scene. But The East did not consider itself in competition at all with these establishments. The bebop-based and soul jazz-oriented joints had no heavy demand for the likes of Eddie Gale, the Mtume Umoja Ensemble, and other East. "It was a different audience altogether," claims Mensah Wali. "Those places were bars; we weren't serving any alcohol. We were nationalists, we were Africans, it was a different

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<sup>167</sup> Weusi, Jitu. Interview, 27 September 2003.

scene altogether, definitely an alternative.”<sup>168</sup> It is impossible at this late date to quantify the extent of the diversity of BXIE patrons, but in interviews most scene participants emphasized its ecumenical nature. Jazz fans of various cultural perspectives, cultural nationalists, “brothers with suits,” and a large contingent of East members (most of whom were working the shows) formed the legendarily enthusiastic audience. Pianist/vocalist Donald Smith, who often played The East and formed lasting relationships with many of its members, recalled that

The audience was mostly Afrocentric or people who just love black music—those were the two audiences. The Brooklyn jazz community, the Brooklyn black music community, is old. A rich history and one that it is not told...

He also noted the regular presence of families, couples with their children of various sizes including infants, at the concerts, “because it is a cultural center.”<sup>169</sup> This familial atmosphere was a dramatic contrast to the largely male audience composition at most jazz venues, complete with cigarette smoke and alcohol, and of course children were not allowed in bars. None of my respondents reported any disruption to programs caused by the presence of young children. Both musicians and East workers tell of marvelously receptive crowds. Once again Donald Smith’s words are representative:

The thing about The East when you go in there you have this club where all these black people who are very culture-centered, Afrocentric to the core, and you in there and as soon as you hit your first note they start to hollering and screaming and you know this is going to go this way for the whole night from 8 or 9 to 3 or 4 in the morning. It never lets up and you’re not going to find that crowd probably

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<sup>168</sup> Wali, Mensah. Telephone interview, 26 July 2004.

<sup>169</sup> Smith, Donald. Interview, 12 July 2004.

nowhere else except people who are thinking along those same lines. So that's what made The East what it was.

### WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN?

The East as an institution was Pan-Africanist and did not allow whites, perceived as the enemy of black people, inside its doors. This policy was maintained for the otherwise very public Black Experience in Sound, and some members thought very strongly that the absence of whites enhanced the level of communication between musicians and listeners. *Although there were no Nation of Islam adherents in the group,* the separatist sentiment so widespread among nationalists and black youth of the era was dominant within The East circles. Says Wali,

It was just sort of the way of the world... We felt that white folks, coming from Elijah Muhammad, were the devil. Because we were highly influenced by Malcolm, early Malcolm. So white folks [were] the devil: "we can't have no devilation in here" [laughter]... It was a house for African people, so it wasn't so much like white folks are not welcome, it was a house for *African* people.<sup>170</sup>

Neither Weusi nor Wali recalls that this decision evoked much debate, either on political or practical grounds, though Weusi suggests that he personally had some reservations: "We enacted it for good reasons, and it stuck for good reasons, but that's not to say all of us, even myself, were in total agreement with it. And at certain points I certainly felt we should become a little more flexible." But to many in their core constituency, and within the organization, the idea of an exclusively black private cultural space was appealing, as was the defiance of American liberalism expressed by such a stance. "This is a private club for people of African descent, which means we can

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<sup>170</sup> Wali, Mensah. Telephone interview, 26 July 2004.

decide who we want to let come in,” is how Maliki expressed it. In addition to being a perhaps dubious expression of black self-determination, they felt that the policy created a unique and important environment that allowed for greater spiritual, cultural and political communication between the black people present. “What made it so spiritual [was] no white folks, man: this is what made the spirit so deep in the place. This is what made the place get up off the ground and leave because the vibration was so correct in there,” offered Maliki. Donald Smith did not feel that the absence of white folks impacted his performances, but “the cultural level [of the crowd] made the difference, the whole ambience, how everybody is dressed, the whole vibe.” The no-whites policy

...didn't bother me, but it did bother some other musicians... We tried to tell everybody that for the things that had to be said to black people and in the way you wanted to say it to black people, you didn't need other people there because then their feelings might get hurt...because they think that you're talking about them, but you're just talking about a political situation and an economic situation.

However, given the amount of social integration in the jazz world, some conflict was inevitably caused by the policy. Beyond the question of white fans of bands who might futilely seek admittance to East performances, the musicians themselves often had close associates, friends, wives, girlfriends, and/or band members, who were white. Archie Shepp, who played The East on numerous occasions, was known to be in a long-term marriage to a white woman, and to employ white musicians, had no qualms about not bringing such folks to his East gigs. (His wife, busy with childrearing, rarely attended his shows anyway.) Because he supported their quest for black empowerment and self-determination, Shepp honored their policy, even though his very integrated

lifestyle was no secret at all. The East folks believe that few artists did not play the room because of their admittance policy, and one is hard pressed to name a likely band that did not appear there at least once. The most notorious incident arising out of the policy was the ill-fated Elvin Jones gig scheduled for January 15-16, 1971, a point at which the BXIE had been operating for just over one year. According to Wali, he explained the philosophy of The East and its admittance policy to Jones when he visited the drummer's home and made the agreement for the performance. Jones voiced no objection at that time, but when two white men, his friends or associates, showed up to attend the first night's show and were denied entry, the drummer declared that if they could not come in, he would not play. When Weusi, a friend of Jones' for close to a decade, was summoned to resolve the dispute, he was faced with "one of the hardest things I ever had to do." He insisted that the policy would be enforced, and Jones packed up his equipment and left, and apparently spoke harshly of The East thereafter, attempting to discourage other musicians from playing there. Frank Foster, a member of Jones' trio that night, suggested that drummer Beaver Harris, who lived in Brooklyn, be called to come and perform in Jones' stead. This Harris agreed to do, and Donald Smith came up to entertain the crowd on piano until his arrival. According to Wali, this incident only increased the level of respect for The East within their community: "The word went out on that, brothers and sisters loved it, and the fact that we stood strong on our line."

### **THE EAST VISION OF THE FUNCTIONS OF BLACK MUSIC**

The Black Experience in Sound aimed for an experience that went beyond entertainment to encompass cultural enlightenment and spiritual uplift for African

Americans, and was a critical component of The East's nation-building project. In some cases patrons of the shows learned about and became members of the organization. Weusi proudly claims that several people met their mates there. As stated earlier, the founders regarded jazz as a central component of black culture, with a sufficiently broad appeal to be the drawing card for their "fundraising" nightclub. But they also sincerely believed the music to have a direct role in furthering their goal of black liberation. The music presented in proper context could provide experiences that would strengthen black identity and expand awareness, in addition to stimulating communal joy. "What would happen at The East when they start that place would lift up off Claver Place and leave that block. That's how spiritual the music [was]," states Maliki. "We were being driven by the music at that time, and when you are driven by a force, you have no choice but to meet the demands of that force," recalls Weusi, specifically mentioning John Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders, and Leon Thomas, and "The Creator Has A Master Plan."

Maliki noted that

The music at that time is tied to the culture. The people of the sixties made this music part of their struggle. In other words, if you were black and you were a nationalist, you were into jazz. You weren't into rap. I mean, you dug r&b, you're listening to Aretha, but if you were of intellect and knew your history and understood your culture, you were into jazz. And therefore jazz identified with the person in the struggle who was hip.

For Wali, who did the booking through August 1974,

If you're doing a business like this, the first criteria is always how many people you're going to bring in the house... First was what I knew, who I knew, and after that, it was whoever I thought would put some people in the house and had something of value, and by something of value, I guess, we were coming from a nationalist

perspective, we wanted folks whose music expressed that is some kind of way, shape or form.

Indeed, the bands booked at The East represent a spectrum of approaches to expressing what we might call the Black Arts impulse. The Milford Graves -Andrew Cyrille – Rashied Ali “Dialogue of the Drums” is but one example of more challenging, experimental music by men who were quite engaged in the struggle for black self-determination. The Dialogue, a quite literal description of their show, was one component of their independent project that included the record label IPS, and Ali’s club “Ali’s Alley” and Survival Records.. On the other hand, the vocal-oriented efforts of Doug and Jean Carn, Carlos Garnett, and Gary Bartz Ntu Troop, a more easily accessible sounds to most American ears, were regular features at BXIE. Other more “mainstream” nominally bebop-based performers such as Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Freddie Hubbard, Betty Carter were staples. In some way, through their business practices, public rhetoric, or musical and lyrical content, most of the acts who played The East were identifiably part of the general movement for African American empowerment. Wali recalls that booking the more experimental players was at least partly a personal indulgence, especially from the standpoint of bringing in paying customers:

But I thought what they represented was something of value in terms of the Black Experience in Sound. We tried to keep the balance. I wouldn’t have Rashied [Ali] and Cecil Taylor and cats that were too challenging back to back. We tried to mix it up so that at least one week we’d have a full house and another week we may not have a full house. Because we had to be responsible for whatever agreement we made [with the musicians]. To this day nobody can say that they walked away with us owing them something. We always met the commitment.

Whatever their particular sound, their charge at 10 Claver Place was to bring a commitment of energy and spirit to the occasion, one that allowed the possibility of transcendence so often recalled by scene participants.

When you came to The East you came to play. You couldn't bullshit nobody. You either played or you didn't come. Because the people were going to make you play.<sup>171</sup>

Weusi tells a story about several East members going to see Freddie Hubbard at a club in Philadelphia, witnessing a desultory set in front of a predominantly white audience. Told that The East contingent was in the house, suddenly the Hubbard band began to cook ferociously. This story, difficult to confirm at this point, illustrates the expectations The East had of their acts to perform at an extremely high level, one that matched energy put out by the audience. According to Donald Smith,

When you hit your first note, they're hollering and screaming, they're up there with you... Because it starts on that level, it makes you go to the spirit level because you've got this intensity coming from the audience, you've got this intensity coming from the bandstand, and it hooks up together and you transcend to the spirit level... You're out there into the cosmos, it's the most profound feeling you could ever have, but it's also a dangerous feeling because you couldn't do that all the time or you would die. It's too intense for you to be able to do that on an everyday basis... To be in a crowd where you know the people are going to give... In other words, you've got that thing called call and response. And once you've got that going... But nobody's going to do it at the level that black people do it. The East can be compared to being in a sanctified church.

It is an apropos comparison, as each environment was anointed and dedicated to a spiritual cause, in The East's case the gospel of black nationalism. And for each the music was seen as a conduit to states of enlightenment as well as reinforcement of the

faith and collective joy. Mensah Wali notes that the shows often deeply engaged people who were not necessarily great fans of the music:

When you're in an environment where everybody is happy, you can't help but be happy, so some folks were just caught up in the moment... The participation of all those back then helped to make it an historic happening: it was sisters working the kitchen, sisters working the tables, brothers and sisters. There were people working the door, people that had to do maintenance, people operating the sound equipment. We had businesses going on at the time. When people came in the place we had books for sale. It availed the possibility of them buying a dashiki or having one made for them even. It turned some people on to vegetarianism. There were a lot of outgrowths of the experience in various ways, so it means different things to different people at this time.

### **THE OPERATION OF THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN SOUND**

The Black Experience in Sound opened December 31, 1969 and ran weekly through much of 1975, excepting periods of inactivity due to remodeling at 10 Claver. The major period of closure was from August 1974 to the beginning of March 1975. The reopening appears to have sustained for not much more than a year: a four-day Pharoah Sanders gig in April 1976 is the last weekend concert that *Black News*, a full (but not complete) chronicler of the shows, would ever make mention of. (The East did sponsor many musical events after that point, from booking acts at the annual African Street Fairs (initiated in 1973), at their Kwanza celebrations and other special events.) From the beginning it was designed not only to pay for itself but to generate operating funds for The East, through admission fees and, equally importantly, the sale of food and drink from the soon to be famous East kitchen. Between 20 and 40 persons were

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<sup>171</sup> Maliki. Telephone interview, 18 February 2004.

required to staff the shows, depending on the size of the crowd. Gender proscriptions were in effect. In this section I will discuss the arrangements with artists, publicity, staffing, and programmatic aspects of the shows.

As previously noted, the hiring of bands to play The East was greatly facilitated by the numerous friendships Weusi and Wali had with jazz musicians, extending back a number of years. Through attending shows and prior promotions, they had bonded with both Brooklyn-based musicians such as Carlos Garnett, Gary Bartz, and Roland Alexander, as well as many who lived across the river like Pharoah Sanders, Archie Shepp, and Billy Harper. In the early days they called on these connections to play the room for terms often lower than the musicians' normal fees. Their selling points were that the cats would be supporting and indeed helping to build an important African American cultural institution, and have the opportunity to play for a hip black crowd. Many of the artists they called upon were receptive to these appeals. The East spoke directly to the musicians in virtually all cases, rather than booking agencies or managers. It was not a challenge to work through personal negotiation given their pre-existing relationships. Many deals were consummated over the telephone. As the place built up a track record and began to reach out to musicians whom they did not know or know well, they sought to make personal visits to their homes, where not only fees could be negotiated, but the concept and goals of The East could be made clear. In addition to making the case that performing there was a contribution to the struggle, these meetings also allowed The East to explicitly inform the artists of their unusual audience admittance policy.

The BXIE was a weekend affair, running Friday and Saturday nights at the beginning, and by June of 1970 often going Sundays for a third night. Looking at the schedule overall, there does not appear to be a consistent pattern to this: artist availability probably was probably the major factor. Only Pharoah Sanders appears always to have done three nights, whereas other popular regulars like the Carns, Archie Shepp, and McCoy Tyner had both two and three-night engagements. According to Weusi, the fees offered by The East ranged from \$500 per weekend for what he called local groups, such as Roland Alexander, James Spaulding, Chief Bey. \$1200 per was the fee for those he termed top groups, the likes of Tyner, Rahsaan, and Lee Morgan. Sanders, as the place's number one draw, was in a category unto himself, commanding \$2000 for his three night gigs. Archie Shepp was a special friend of The East, working for \$600 per weekend. (He also was a late fill-in for the Albert Ayler East gig that never was: Ayler was booked for Dec. 25-27 of 1970, but was discovered dead in the water (the East River) in late November.) According to Maliki,

All of them gave us a decent rate because if [not], we never could afford them. All of them were very understanding. What happened was once some cats came and played the word went out like wildfire—"You have to go down there, you've got to see this place, there's no alcohol". And the musicians knew if you came down here you had to play, there was no bullshit... When you left it was sunup.

Donald Smith stated that the musicians worked for lower rates but

You didn't care. The whole thing about The East that made The East real beautiful is that when things got better for them, they also got better for the musicians. They did get to the point where they could offer you top dollar, but it took time. They didn't fail that test.

In Weusi's accounting, during the three-night gigs, one night's revenue paid the artist fees, one night paid staff wages and other house expenses, leaving the last night's receipts as The East's profits. Staff expenses were considerable. Although individuals were paid low sums, twenty folks were needed to staff the various functions for the shows, and in the case of the big draws, forty folks were required. People were needed for food preparation, stage and room setup, security, as servers, to man the door and cash register. Weusi recalls that they underestimated the popularity of the BXIE, and as a result did not have enough staff in the early days.

Income was generated by two main sources, admission fees which were three and four dollars, and sales of kitchen items. Martha Bright ran the kitchen and was responsible for many of the recipes for drink and grain-based entrée items and baked goods. "Mama Lottie" was the main cook, the one who produced the quantities of food for an often full house in the range of 200 souls. Making money from serving refreshments was a part of The East plan before the weekend concerts began, but once they did, it proved to be a strongly symbiotic relationship. The shows put The East kitchen on the map in Brooklyn and New York nationalist communities, which led to catering gigs and the opening of the Sweet East restaurant. (The kitchen also made a strong impact through providing food for the students of Uhuru Sasa Shule, and would soon handle food services at other independent schools in Brooklyn. At the same time, the unique health-conscious and from all accounts quite tasty refreshments available at the concerts enhanced the experience of learning about something new, and putatively wholesome, which The East saw itself providing. Certainly these are part of the memories scene participants have of that time, as Mensah Wali relates:

Today I can run into somebody like [pianist] Danny Mixon, who'll say, "Man, that Kuumba rice! Ain't had none of that in a *looong* time. The East punch!" [laughs] That's Danny's line. "We've got to do that again!"

The primary mode of publicity for the BXIE was flyers. Many of these were done by Ron Warwell, and they aimed not only to inform but to make artistic statements. Images of the musicians with pyramids in the background, exotic calligraphy served to accentuate the focus on black creativity. These flyers were often reproduced in *Black News*, their monthly newspaper whose circulation reached 25,000, mostly in New York. East performances were also listed in the *Amsterdam News* community calendar section, and were mentioned on WLIB and WRVR, jazz-oriented New York radio stations during that time. From April 1970 to October 1972, many East performances were mentioned numerous times in *Down Beat's* "Strictly Ad Lib" column, which was a roundup of recent and upcoming jazz gigs listed by city. (Quite a number of black nationalist- or radical- sponsored music events were listed in the column during this era, perhaps surprisingly.)

Beyond the institutional setting, the uniqueness of the BXIE lay in the its cultural programming. These were not mere jazz sets, for the music was just the main dish in what they saw as a feast of spiritually regenerative black cultural, and political, expression. There was always an opening "cultural" act, whether that be a poet, African dancers, or a one act play. Many times the opening act was listed on the flyer, but not always. Most often a poet would open, and over the years many took the stage. Among the most notable of them were Sonia Sanchez, who appeared at least twice, in February 1971 with Betty Carter, and with the Collective Black Artists Band in July 1973. Askia

Toure was on the bill with Rashied Ali in March 1971, Jackie Earley with Gary Bartz July 1971. Jayne Cortez was on a March 1973 bill with Lonnie Liston Smith and the Cosmic Echoes, while actress/writer Sandra Sharp appeared with Roy Ayers in the same month. The Last Poets appeared there several times, but usually as the featured act rather than opening. African-based drum and dance groups were often on the bill. Featured several times were the House of Nilaja Drummers and Dancers, and Razak Ishangi and Family. BXIE also put on revolutionary black drama, most often presented by Yusef Iman, the “High Priest” of The East, and his family troupe, Weusi Kuumba. In July 1972 an outfit called Liberated Libra performed “Jesus Christ Super Nigger” before Gary Bartz Ntu Troop played. Donald Smith remembers that he played a gig at The East with his brother Lonnie, on a bill with Betty Carter, during the time that a mounting of Amiri Baraka’s *Slave Ship* was ongoing. The stage had been configured to look like a slave ship, and was not altered for the concert. Thus, both bands set up and played amidst the grim scenery of shackles and whips. Somehow at The East it did not seem out of place.

Attending an event at The East entailed hearing more than the featured performers, for the group was about constantly projecting the idea of nation-building. The emcee for the BXIE shows, often ASA stalwart Adeyemi Bandele, was charged with an educative function as well.

There was always some school involved. Anybody who came to The East at any time always got schooled on something that was affecting the black community, the black world. That was there in the introduction, that was

there in the intermission, and that was there in the closing.<sup>172</sup>

According to Weusi, the emcee would have a list of specific political issues to relate to the crowd, whether that be updating campaigns against police brutality in New York or struggles in places like Cairo, Illinois or Tunica, Ms, encouraging support for imprisoned activists like H. Rap Brown and for other embattled militants, or bringing from Africa and the Caribbean news of black people organizing and fighting. The message overall was geared towards Pan-Africanism and struggle.

### LIVE AT THE EAST

The legacy of the Black Experience in Sound is kept alive to some degree by the several albums that were recorded, or at least claimed to be, in those sessions. The three jazz albums, by James Mtume, Rashied Ali, and Pharoah Sanders, all appear to have been recorded in 1971; in June 1974, Haki Madhubuti and the Afrikan Liberation Arts Ensemble recorded an album of poetry and jazz, *Rise Vision Comin'*.

“Healing Song” is the centerpiece of Sanders’ *Live at The East*, released in late 1972 on the Impulse! Label. The last sound is the clearly involved and pleased crowd, roaring their approval. As it turns out these joyful listeners were East folks, but in fact *Live at The East* was not recorded at 10 Claver Place at all. The music was taped at a recording studio. But East members and others were invited guests at the recording. According to several East folks, Sanders’ original idea was to record an album at 10 Claver, to capture the vibe which positively impacted the playing, as well as to publicize The East through titling the LP thusly. Sanders first appeared there in September 1970

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<sup>172</sup> Smith, Donald. Telephone interview, 12 July 2004.

and was an immediate obvious favorite, the most popular act there throughout the BXIE run. Nicknamed "The Reverend" by the Claver Place crowd, Sanders was a strong supporter of the establishment. *Live at The East* was intended to increase the spot's profile. However, recording at Claver and achieving adequate sound proved a great difficulty in 1971. Some say there was some recording done there and its inadequacies realized, necessitating booking studio time. Others say the recording problem was recognized prior to the playing date. In any case *Live at The East* was released in late 1972, the follow-up to *Black Unity*. By this point, Sanders, who had enjoyed steady but far from universal praise from (younger) jazz critics, was being called repetitious and uninspired. A surprising slam of *Live at The East* appeared in Black Books Bulletin (established 1971), Madhubuti's quarterly review of black writing and music to a lesser extent. It and Coltrane's work were disparaged as theological jazz. Pharoah's works from this era may be said to have a recognizable formula, lengthy pieces modulating from slow and mellow to intense and frenetic, to return to mellow montunas, with much small percussion augmenting the basic quartet combo. Some saw lack of harmonic variety in the one and two-chord structures, but clearly The East folks were fully into Pharoah's vision, and he remained the largest draw for the entire BXIE run. At least one East veteran believes that *Live at The East* did increase the spot's profile, observing that in the wake of its release, weekend audiences became larger and were coming from more places in the New York metropolitan area, instead of being primarily a Brooklyn crowd. In any case it was not one of the saxophonist's better sellers, and was soon out of print. It remains one of the few Sanders LPs on Impulse! that has not been reissued on CD.

Percussionist James Mtume, later a highly successful r&b producer and performer, led the Mtume Umoja Ensemble into The East August 29, 1971, for a concert and recording session which would yield *Alkebu-Lan: Land of the Blacks*, discussed at length in chapter 2. Two other significant LPs were also recorded at The East, Rashied Ali's *New Directions in Modern Music*, recorded in 1971, and Haki Madhubuti and Nation's *Rise Vision Contin* recorded in June 1974. These few artifacts document the existence of a jazz scene that illustrates a sustained desire to preserve, promote, and present progressive African American jazz in an Afrocentric setting within historic black communities. The East and the Black Experience In Sound are an important chapter in the history of the Black Arts.

## CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters establish that the relationship between the music called jazz and the Black Arts concept was a multidimensional phenomenon, encompassing Afrocentric, committed, and learned musical performance, aggressive contestation of the music's meanings in literary forums by poets and critics, and sustained efforts to preserve the music within black communities and to provide a proper cultural context for the special benefits of that music. In this sense we may speak of a Black Arts movement in jazz. The achievements of this movement were considerable. Perhaps of greatest historical significance is that much of the music produced by these performers are among the most significant aesthetic statements in African American, and American, art. Certainly, when one considers the question of the finest and longest-lasting artworks of the Black Arts movement, much of the music discussed in this study would be in the first rank.

Pharoah Sanders, following Coltrane, Sun Ra, Albert Ayler and others operating in the realm of the jazz avant garde, projected a sense of devout worship of and search for ultimate truth, and dressed himself in the raiment of Eastern (and African) spiritual culture – as seen with his name, mode of dress, use of Arabic and other song titles, use of instruments such as the tamboura and other Indian instruments, and the scales and modes his music relied on. This spiritual stance was taken seriously and at face value by his fans, including the writers of the Black Arts movement, for whom he was an avatar

of a new/old and much needed consciousness.<sup>173</sup> This is borne out especially in his exalted status at the Black Experience In Sound concert series of The East.

At the same time, he was often criticized for being repetitive and rhythmically static by some jazz critics, for whom his stance and projection of devotion and reverence was an essentially empty pose.<sup>174</sup> This dissertation, by exploring the world of African American ideas about and support of jazz during this important time period, contextualizes the Sanders project, which was linked to larger Black Arts movement of seeking alternative, higher consciousness that would aid in the emancipation of black people. It is no coincidence that the artists in poetry, drama, and visual art have likewise faced similar dismissals of their work. This dissertation thus argues that the *Karma* LP is emblematic of great Black Arts art, both in terms of the cultural values it reflects and its reception by both the movement and mainstream opinions.

Is there a consensus on what are the major works, the significant aesthetic statements, of the Black Arts movement? This is a subject known more by the names of its leading figures rather than specific works. The names of Sanchez, Baraka, Neal, Madhubuti, and a few others serve as shorthand for discussing an entire era. Some commentators, including Baraka and Neal, are quick to cite musical figures and performances as emblems of the era, more so than literature. Sometimes soul musicians are claimed as central to the movement: Aretha Franklin, Curtis Mayfield, and James

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<sup>173</sup> See Price, "Blackmusicman." And Spellman, "Revolution In Sound." And Neal, Larry. "Karma/Pharoah." *Cricket* (1969): 6-8.

<sup>174</sup> See *Down Beat* record reviews of Sanders' *Village of the Pharoahs* LP (25 April 1974, p. 26-28); *Elevation* (8 July 1974, p. 24); *Karma* (18 September 1969, p. 26. And *Coda* reviews of *Love In Us All* (April 1976, p. 17) and *Elevation* (October 1976, p. 18-

Brown most prominently. Yet, the body of Afrocentric work created by jazz musicians in this period seems larger and of longer lasting valence than most Black Arts literary work. If we define the Black Arts prime values as articulating a black status quo-challenging identity, veneration of Africa and a black heroic tradition, questioning of white supremacy, advocacy of healing or uplifting of the black polity, then a plethora of works in jazz must join the list of Black Arts masterworks: Rahsaan Roland Kirk's "Blacknuss," *Natural Black Inventions*, Bobby Hutcherson's *Now* LP, Abbey Lincoln's *People in Me*, Gary Bartz's *Harlem Bush Music* project, Doug Carn's first three LPs, Pharoah Sanders' *Karma* and *Live at The East*, Mtume's *Alkebulan* and *Rebirth Cycle* LPs. By whatever measure, these achievements, along with live performances and associations with nation-building and insurgent community projects, stand as exemplary manifestations of the Black Arts imperative. After all, the movement was neither monolithic nor a mass movement, for many acknowledged Black Arts events/programs served small, essentially niche audiences. To be sure, much jazz work is produced by established white-owned networks of distribution such as record labels. Some of the great Black Arts-related works recorded in Europe include such as Jackie McLean and Thabo Michael Carvin's *Antiquity* LP, Bartz's classic *I've Known Rivers*, and works by Archie Shepp, Clifford Thornton, and the Art Ensemble of Chicago. However, site of production is not an excluding factor in the Black Arts discussion of dance, visual, or literary work. Here is a body of work that must become more central to future discussions of the Black Arts movement.

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19). And Milkowski, Bill. "Pharoah Sanders Expanding Orbit." In *JazzTimes*, March 1995, p. 66.

## APPENDIX

### BLACK ARTS AND BLACK POWER: A TIMELINE

#### 1950s

- 2/51 Execution of the Martinsville Seven for rape, Richmond VA
- 1952 Mau Mau rebellion begins, Kenya
- 1953 Jomo Kenyatta convicted and sentenced
- 1954 Algerian war of independence begins
- 5/7/54 French colonialists defeated at Dien Bien Phu
- 5/17/54 *Brown v Board* decision
- 1/55 Ray Charles' *I've Got A Woman* charts r&b
- 2/12/55 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. military advisers to Vietnam
- 3/12/55 Death of Charlie Parker
- 4/18-24/55 Bandung Conference, Indonesia
- Summer 55 Gigi Gryce founds Melotone Music
- 8/55 Murder of Emmett Till
- 12/5/55 Montgomery bus boycott begins
- 2/56 Stalin's murdered millions revealed
- 1956 Egypt nationalizes Suez Canal
- 1956 Congress of Black Artists and Writers, Paris (Cesaire and A Diop, orgs)
1956. PAIGC founded
- 3/6/57 Ghanaian independence day
- 10/57 Sam Cooke's *You Send Me* begins 6 month pop chart run
- 1958 Chinua Achebe publishes *Things Fall Apart*
- 1958 France announce "independence" plan for its African territories
- 6/58 Paul Robeson's passport returned by US government
- 7/58 The Impressions' *For Your Precious Love*
- 10/58 Ahmed Abdul-Malik records *Jazz Sahara* LP (Riverside)
- 10/2/58 Guinea outright independence from France
- 12/31/58 Batista flees Cuba; Castro takes power
- 1959 *Come Back Africa* anti-apartheid film released
- 1959 *Black Orpheus* Brazilian carnival film released
- 3/59 *Raisin in the Sun* opens NYC 3/59; Lorraine wins "Play of the Year"
- 5/59
- 3/59 Ahmed Abdul-Malik records *East Meets West* LP (Victor)
- 4/59 *Kind of Blue* LP recorded
- 4-5/59 Lynching of Mack Charles Parker and aftermath, Poplarville, MS
- 6/59 Nina Simone has hit with *I Loves You Porgy*
- 7/59 Ray Charles' *What'd I Say* charts, 1<sup>st</sup> top ten pop hit
- 8/26/59 Police beating of Miles Davis outside Birdland NYC
- 8 & 10/59 Olatunji records *Drums of Passion*
- 11/15, 20/59 Miles Davis records *Sketches of Spain*
- 11/59 Miriam Makeba arrives in US
- #### 1960

- 1960 17 African countries gain independence
- 1960 Albert Luthuli of S Africa awarded Nobel Peace Prize
- 1960 Randy Weston records *Umrn Afrika*
- 1960 Ray Charles signs with ABC; *Georgia On My Mind* hits 9/60 (#1 pop)
- 2/1/60 Sit-ins at Greensboro
- 3/21/60 Sharpeville massacre, S Africa
- 4/15/60 SNCC formed
- 6/60 Stanley Turrentine records 1<sup>st</sup> Blue Note LP *Look Out!*
- 6/30/60 Congo Independence Day
- Summer 1960 Jon Hendricks' *Evolution of the Blues* premiers at Monterey Jazz Festival
- 8/60 Sam Cooke's *Chain Gang*
- 8/31-9/6/60 *We Insist: The Freedom Now Suite* recorded by Max Roach
- 9/1/60 Jackie McLean records *Jackie's Bag* (includes *Appt in Ghana*)
- 9/60 Castro visits Harlem on UN trip; stays in Hotel Theresa
- 9/18/60 George Jackson arrested; spends rest of his life in California prisons
- 10/60 Jerry Butler's *He Will Break Your Heart*
- 10/24/60 Coltrane records *My Favorite Things*
- 11/60 *Don't Go to Strangers* charts by Etta Jones
- 1961**
- 1961 Jomo Kenyatta released from prison
- 1961 ANC organizes for armed struggle
- 1961 On Guard and Organization of Young Men organized in NYC
- 1961 Pan-Afrikan People's Arkestra organized, LA
- 1961 Gloria Lynne's *I'm Glad There Is You*
- 1/17/61 Patrice Lumumba killed
- 2/15/61 CAWAH, On Guard-led protest at UN re US role in Lumumba killing
- 2/22/61 Abbey Lincoln's *Straight Ahead* LP rec (Candid); last US LP till 1978
- 2/61 Ahmad Jamal opens Alhambra Lounge (no alcohol; goes 7 months)
- 4/61 Cuban Revolution declares itself socialist
- 4/17/61 U.S.-backed invasion of Cuba at Bay of Pigs
- 5/4/61 Freedom Rides begin
- 5/14/61 Bus burning in Anniston, Ala.
- 5/23/61 *The Music of Ahmed Abdul-Malik* recorded, New Jazz
- 5/27/61 Blakey records *The Freedom Rider*
- 5/61 Genet's *The Blacks* opens NYC (Paris 10/59); wins 3 Obies 5/29/61
- 5-6/61 Coltrane records *Africa Brass* sessions
- 6/61 *Negro Digest* reappears (under Hoyt Fuller)
- 6/61 *Ray Charles and Betty Carter* LP recorded
- 6, 8/61 Cannonball Adderley and Nancy Wilson LP recorded
- 1961 *Liberator* first issue
- 8/28/61 Monroe NC riot leads to Robert Williams exile
- 9/29/61 Ossie Davis' *Purlie Victorious* opens
- 9/29-11/10/61 Oliver Nelson's *Afro-American Sketches* recorded
- 10/61 Martin Duberman's *In White America* opens
- 11/61 Week-long African carnival 1961 in NYC: Primus, Olatunji, Mongo

- 11/61 Impressions' *Gypsy Woman*; Crystals' *There's No Other Like My Baby*  
 12/19/61 AMSAC Festival of American Negro Music, Lagos  
 1961 Langston Hughes publishes *Ask Your Mama: Twelve Moods for Jazz*  
 1961 Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* published; he dies 12/61
- 1962**
- 1/62 Gene Chandler's *Duke Of Earl*  
 2/15/62 Kennedy orders 5000 troops to Thailand  
 3/2/62 Wilt Chamberlain scores 100 points in NBA game  
 3/62 Afro-American Association founded, Berkeley-Oakland CA  
 3/19/62 Jackie McLean records *Let Freedom Ring*  
 3/24/62 African lecturers at internat'l education conference NYC  
 5/28/62 Herbie Hancock's 1<sup>st</sup> LP *Takin' Off* recorded (incl *Watermelon Man*)  
 6/62 Crystals' *Uptown*  
 Summer 62 Umbra Poets Workshop in effect with weekly sessions  
 8/22/62 Ahmed Abdul-Malik records *Sonnds of Africa* (New Jazz)  
 Fall 62 Afro-American Institute founded in Cleveland, OH  
 Fall 62 Afro-American Association radio program begins on KDIA  
 10/62 Cuban missile crisis  
 10/27/62 Max Roach records *Speak Brother Speak!*  
 12/62 Dionne Warwick's 1<sup>st</sup> hit *Don't Make Me Over*
- 1963**
- 1963 *The Fire Next Time* published (in magazine form 12/62)  
 1963 OAU formed  
 1963 Kenyatta becomes president of Kenya  
 1963 Nelson Mandela and other ANC leaders given life sentences  
 1963 PAIGC begins armed struggle, Guinea-Bissau  
 1963 Cheikh A Diop's *Cultural Unity of Black Africa* English edition (1959)  
 1/63 Gigi Gryce dissolves his failing music publishing companies  
 Early 1963 First issue of *Umbra*  
 3/23/63 AC Powell holds rally at 125<sup>th</sup>; invites Malcolm X as speaker  
 3/63 Baby Washington's *That's How Heartaches Are Made*; Jimmy Holiday's  
*How Can I Forget*; Ruby & the Romantics' *Our Day Will Come*  
 4/63 (or late March) Demonstrations begin in Cambridge MD  
 4/63 Birmingham Project C begins  
 4/30/63 Jackie McLean records *One Step Beyond*  
 5/63 Barbara Lewis' *Hello Stranger*  
 5/3/63 In Birmingham, the dogs and firehoses first attack the children  
 5/27/63 RAM members beaten, arrested at construction site picket. Philly  
 6/12/63 Medgar Evers killed  
 6/13/63 *Eastern Moods of Ahmed Abdul-Malik* recorded (Prestige)  
 6/14/63 Martial law imposed in Cambridge MD; Nat'l Guard stays till 7/7/64  
 6/29/63 Peter Paul & Mary's *Blowin' in the Wind* enters charts, stays for 15 wks  
 Summer 63 NYC: sustained protests against job discrimination, esp. building trades  
 7/16/63 Thich Quang Duc immolates self protesting Diem regime, Vietnam  
 7/63 MLK egged in Harlem

- 8/63 Ntu Stop, African attire and accessories shop, opens @ 125<sup>th</sup> St, Harlem
- 8/63 Police and youth rumble on 125<sup>th</sup> two nights running
- 8/28/63 March on Washington
- 8/28/63 Freedom Now Party formally announced
- 8/31/63 CORE-led demonstrations begin at Jefferson Bank, St Louis MO re jobs
- 9/63 *Blues People* published
- 9/15/63 16<sup>th</sup> Street church bombing, Birmingham
- 9/20/63 Jackie McLean records *Destination Out*
- 9/23/63 William Moore of Baltimore killed in AL, on 1 man protest march to MS
- 10/63 Impressions' *It's All Right*
- 11/12/63 Donald Byrd's *A New Perspective* recorded
- 11/18/63 Coltrane records *Alabama*
- 11/22/63 President Kennedy assassinated
- 11/24/63 LBJ declares War on Poverty
- 12/14/63 Death of Dinah Washington
- 12/21/63 Lee Morgan records *The Sidewinder*
- 1963? Frank Greenwood starts Afro-American Cultural Center Committee, LA
- 1964**
- 1964 *Black America*, Revolutionary Action Movement journal, on the scene
- 1964 Kenny Dorham HARYOU staff music director
- 1964 Babs Gonzales' club Insane Asylum
- Early 1964 Umbra split
- 1964 Uptown Writers Group, Harlem: Neal, Toure
- 1964 UGMA started, LA
- 1/14/64 Adrienne Kennedy's *Funnyhouse of a Negro* opens
- 1/64 *Simmer Down*, the Wailers 1<sup>st</sup> Jamaican hit
- 1/64 Ndugu Ngoma Music Marathon NYC: Weston, Dolphy, dancers
- 1/64 Afro Arts Cultural Center (NY) program; Randy Weston on African music
- 1/64 Gloria Lynn's, *I Wish You Love*
- 2/1/64 LBJ announces War on Poverty, appoints R. Sargent Shriver OEO head
- 2/64 Beatles arrive in New York
- 2/15/64 Lee Morgan records *Search for the New Land*
- 2/25/64 Cassius Clay defeats Sonny Liston, announces Muslim status next day
- 3/24/64 *Dutchman* opens
- 3/12/64 Malcolm X announces formation of Muslim Mosque, Inc.
- 4/4/64 Brooklyn CORE announces World's Fair stall-in; Farmer suspends chapter
- 4/7/64 Bulldozer building segregated school crushes Bruce Klunder, CORE Cleveland
- 4/64 Nina Simone records *Mississippi Goddam*
- 4/64 Dionne Warwick's *Walk On By*
- 4/13/64 Malcolm X leaves for Mecca, travels to African countries
- 4/22/64 Opening day of World's Fair; includes African Pavilion
- 4/23/64 James Baldwin's *Blues for Mr. Charlie* opens

5/1-3/64 Black Nationalist Youth Movement convention, Nashville TN (students)  
 5/64 Mercer Ellington hosts jam sessions at Shalimar in Harlem  
 5/21/64 Malcolm X returns from Africa; announces UN human rights campaign  
 6/64 Impressions' *Keep On Pushing*  
 6/17/64 Herbie Hancock's *Empyrean Isles* LP recorded (Blue Note)  
 6/21/64 Chaney, Goodman & Schwerner go missing  
 6/28/64 Founding of OAAU  
 7/2/64 LBJ signs Civil Rights Act into law  
 7/64 The Supremes' *Where Did Our Love Go*; Gene Chandler's *Just Be True*  
 7/64 Deacons for Defense and Justice founded, Jonesboro LA  
 7/7/64 Malcolm X leaves for Africa  
 7/11/64 Murder of Lt. Col. Lemuel Penn, Colbert GA  
 7/16/64 Police killing sparks week-long "riots" in Harlem (& Bed-Stuy)  
 7/17-21/64 OAU conference in Cairo; Malcolm X attends, submits memorandum  
 7/29/64 King, Wilkins, Young & Randolph pledge no mass demonstrations  
 until election  
 8/4/64 Bodies of Chaney, Goodman & Schwerner recovered  
 8/5/64 Jackie McLean records *It's Time* (w/ C Tolliver)  
 8/7/64 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution approved by U.S. Congress  
 8/9/64 NYC court injunction bans Harlem street meetings by many groups  
 8/10/64 Archie Shepp records *Four for Trane* LP  
 8/64 First concerts of Left Bank Jazz Society (local; national acts start in '65)  
 8/26/64 MFDP gets put down in Atlantic City at Democratic convention  
 9/10/64 Pharoah Sanders records 1<sup>st</sup> LP for ESP  
 9/16/64 Jackie McLean records *Action*  
 10/64 Dixon's October Revolution concert series  
 10/64 *African Cookbook* released by Randy Weston (on own label)  
 10/14/64 Announcement of MLK Nobel Peace Prize; official ceremony 12/10/64  
 11/64 Little Anthony and the Imperials record *Goin' Out of My Head*  
 11/24/64 Malcolm X returns to U.S.  
 12/9-10/64 Coltrane records *A Love Supreme*  
 12/10/64 Sam Cooke killed  
 12/64 The Righteous Brothers record *You've Lost That Loving Feeling*  
 12/64 *Nothing But a Man* released  
 12/64 First issue of *SoulBook*  
**1965**  
 1965 Jazz Composers Guild  
 1965 AACM  
 1965 Broadside Press founded  
 1965 Mobutu coup in Congo  
 1/65 Dobie Gray's *The In Crowd*; Gene Chandler's *What Now*  
 1/12/65 Lorraine Hansberry dies  
 1/20-22/65 Miles Davis records *E.S.P.* 1<sup>st</sup> LP with his 2<sup>nd</sup> great quintet  
 1/29/65 Jackie McLean records *Right Now!*  
 1/65 Sam Cooke's *A Change Is Gonna Come* released as single

2/13/65 Malcolm X's home firebombed  
 2/15/65 Nat King Cole dies  
 2/16/65 Archie Shepp records *Fire Music* (also 3/9/65)  
 2/16/65 FBI, NYC arrest 4 in Statue of Liberty bomb case: Robert Collier, BLF  
 2/17/65 Jimmie Lee Jackson killed by cops, Marion AL  
 2/21/65 Malcolm X assassinated  
 2/26/65 Operation Rolling Thunder, U.S. bombing of N Vietnam, begins (8 yrs)  
 2/65 Impressions record *People Get Ready*; Junior Walker's *Shotgun*  
 Spring 65 *Black Dialogue* first issue, out of SF State  
 3/7/65 Bloody Sunday in Selma, Ala  
 3/9/65 Archie Shepp records *Malcolm, Malcolm Semper Malcolm*  
 3/15/65 Ivory Perry creates rush hour traffic jam in St Louis re Alabama situation  
 3/17/65 Alice Herz immolates self in Detroit protesting Vietnam war  
 3/17/65 Herbie Hancock records *Maiden Voyage* LP (Blue Note)  
 3/21-24/65 Selma to Montgomery march  
 3/28/65 BARTS benefit at the Village Gate  
 3/65 BARTS founded  
 3/65 *The Negro Family: The Case for Natl Action (Moynihan)* by Dep of Labor  
 4/3/65 Bobby Hutcherson records 1<sup>st</sup> LP *Dialogue* for Blue Note  
 4/65 Smokey Robinson and the Miracles' *Ooh Baby Baby* and *Tracks of My Tears* 7/65  
 4/65 "Black Happenings" wkly at East End Theater, Village: Pharoah, R  
 Blank  
 5/1/65 ESP concert at Town Hall: *Bells* by Albert Ayler recorded  
 5/12/65 Sit-in at Laclede Gas St Louis re jobs  
 5/65 After 5 months of violence, Bogalusa activists call for national volunteers  
 5/65 Barbara Mason's *Yes I'm Ready*  
 6/65 Wilson Pickett's *In the Midnight Hour*; The Dells' *Stay in My Corner* (1<sup>st</sup> version); Barbara Lewis' *Baby I'm Yours*  
 6/65 Dylan's *Like A Rolling Stone* released  
 6/10/65 Bobby Hutcherson records *Components*  
 6/19/65 *Liberator* 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary Writer's Conference  
 6/65 Coltrane records *Ascension*  
 7/2/65 Archie Shepp at Newport: records *Les Matins Des Noirs*  
 7/14/65 Blue Mitchell records *March on Selma* (LP: *Down With It*)  
 7/25/65 Dylan's controversial Newport Folk Festival appearance  
 7/65 MLK criticizes Vietnam war, in press; SCLC begins Chicago involvement  
 7/65 James Brown's *Papa's Got a Brand New Bag*  
 8/65 Ramsey Lewis' *The In Crowd*  
 8/1/65? Black Arts Festival, Chicago  
 8/6/65 LBJ signs Voting Rights Act into law  
 8/11-16/65 Watts Rebellion

8/65 Lowndes County Freedom Organization, aka Black Panther Party, AL  
 Summer 65 Formation of US, Los Angeles  
 9/65 Jim Brown retires from NFL  
 9/2/65 Coltrane records *(First) Meditations*  
 9/15/65 March and rally against police brutality, St Louis  
 9/24/65 Jackie McLean records *Jackknife* LP (incl *On The Nile*)  
 10/65 *Antobiography of Malcolm X* published  
 10/65 *Moyrihan Report* released to public  
 11/2/65 Norman Morrison immolates self outside McNamara's Pentagon office  
 11/9/65 Roger LaPorte immolates self outside UN protesting Vietnam war  
 11/10/65 *Unity* recorded by Larry Young (w/Woody, Joe, Elvin)  
 11/15/65 DTWard's *Happy Ending & Day of Absence* open, run for 500 shows  
 11/65 "The Crossing," Henry Dumas' 1<sup>st</sup> story in *Negro Digest* (6/65 1<sup>st</sup> poem)  
 12/65 Woody Shaw records 1<sup>st</sup> LP, but no company is interested  
 12/65 *Rainbow 65* charts  
**1966**  
 1966 Olatunji's *More Drums of Passion* released  
 1966 Barbara Gardner's last appearance in *Down Beat*  
 1966 *Battle of Algiers* film released  
 1/3/66 Sammy Younge killed  
 1/6/66 SNCC's anti-Vietnam statement  
 1/66 Floyd McKissick elected CORE national chairman  
 1/66 Stevie Wonder's *Uptight*  
 2/2/66 Coltrane records *Rev. King*  
 2/8/66 Bobby Hutcherson records *Happenings*  
 2/11/66 Bob Marley moves to Wilmington, DE (returns to Jamaica 10/66)  
 2/19/66 Archie Shepp at Both/And Club SF: *Live at SF & 3 for a Quarter* LPs  
 2/24/66 Kwame Nkrumah overthrown by Ghanaian military coup  
 Early 1966 Spirit House organized in Newark  
 Spring 66 WLIB commences fulltime jazz programming  
 Spring 66 First issue of *Journal of Black Poetry* (San Francisco)  
 Spr 66 Jackie McLean teaching music at HARYOU youth center  
 Spr 66 Temptations' *Get Ready* and *Fading Away* and *Ain't Too Proud to Beg*  
 3/19/66 Texas Western wins NCAA basketball title, 1<sup>st</sup> all black unit to do so  
 4/66 Percy Sledge's *When a Man Loves a Woman*  
 4/66 Fisk U. Writer's Conference (Killens)  
 4/66 Panel on jazz and race w/ Shepp, Rahsaan before UMich Shepp concert  
 4/2/66 Joe Henderson quits Horace Silver  
 4/14/66 Ernest Allen's induction refusal announcement, Oakland  
 4/18/66 Bill Russell announced as Boston Celtics head coach for 66-67 season  
 4-5/66 Lee Morgan records *Delightfulee* (incl *Zambia*)  
 5/8-16/66 SNCC elections: Carmichael, Ruby Doris Robinson, Sellers elected  
 5/66 R Weston and Leon Thomas do music for fashion show/dance in  
 Brooklyn

6/66	Concert series at Urban Progress Center, Chicago: Cohran, Jarman, others
6/1-2/66	White House Conference on Civil Rights "To Fulfill These Rights"
6/5/66	Meredith shot
6/16/66	Black Power chant of Carmichael and Ricks
6/24-26/66	Black Arts Convention, Detroit
6 or 7/66	Afro-American Festival of the Arts, Newark
7/4/66	Movement rally in Chicago; Rahsaan, Jimmy Smith, D Gregory
headliner	
7/4/66	CORE natl convention, Baltimore, OKs Blk Power, self-defense, Vietnam
7/22/66	Coltrane performs "Peace on Earth" at concert in Tokyo
7/28/66	Larry Young records <i>Of Love and Peace</i> LP
7/30/66	Dylan's motorcycle wreck
7/66	Jimmy Holiday's <i>Baby I Love You</i>
7/66	Black Panther Party in LA founded by John Floyd
8/66	Black Panther Party of N Cali founded by Ken Freeman/M Lumumba
8/66	Pickett's <i>Land of 1000 Dances</i> ; Jimmy Ruffin's <i>What Becomes of the Brokenhearted</i>
8/66	Archie Shepp records <i>Mama Too Tight</i>
8/14/66	Harlem Black Power rally at Abyssinian re DC conference Labor Day
Fall 66	Influx of new breed at Cornell; birth of Afro-American Society, blk dorm
9/3/66	AC Powell's Black Power conference, DC (closed session)
9/18/66	Charles Lloyd Quartet records <i>Forest Flower</i> at Monterey
9/66	Baraka is visiting professor at San Francisco State
9/66	Robin Gregory, Afro-oriented, elected Howard's homecoming queen
9/66	Merritt College (Oakland Ca) students call for Black Studies curriculum
9/66	BSU organized at Oakland Tech High
10/66	Black Panther Party of Oakland founded
10/66	Gaston Neal founds New School for Afro-American Thought
10/66	Joe Cuba's <i>Bang Bang</i>
10/24-25/66	<i>Miles Smiles</i> LP recorded
11/15/66	Pharoah Sanders records <i>Tauhid</i> LP
11/66	<i>Four Lives in the Bebop Business</i> published
11/66	<i>Negro Digest</i> publishes Henry Dumas' "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?"
11/66	Ronald Reagan elected governor of California
11/29/66	Lee Morgan records <i>The Rajah</i>
12/3/66	Columbia U. Afro-American Society hosts black student conference
12/15/66	Release of Jimi Hendrix's <i>Hey Joe</i>
12/18/66	Albert Ayler's Village Vanguard date ( <i>AA in Greenwich Village</i> )
12/66	SF State BSU requests Black Studies (nonconfrontational)
12/66	Eldridge Cleaver released from prison
12/66	SNCC officially expels remaining white staffers
12/66	400,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam
1966	Military coups in Nigeria

- 1966 Don L. Lee publishes *Think Black!* (Broadside)
- 1967**
- 1967 Afro-American Council on Africa, an 'educational group' NYC
- 1967 Olatunji Center for African Culture ???
- 1967 Jim Brown's film career takes off (*Dirty Dozen* 2<sup>nd</sup> one)
- 1967 Broadside publishes *For Malcolm X* anthology
- 1967 Styron's *Confessions of Nat Turner* published
- 1967 *Black Power*, newspaper of BPP of Northern California, on the scene
- 1967 Julius Nyerere's *Uhuru Na Umoja*, Oxford U Pr (collection)
- 1967 Rex Stewart dies; autobiography *Boy Meets Horn* finish
- 1/67 Cannonball Adderley's *Mercy Mercy Mercy* charts pop and R&B
- 1/67 Ruby Doris Robinson is hospitalized
- 1/10/67 Adam Clayton Powell unseated; 1000 protest on Capitol steps
- 1-4/67 Randy Weston State Dept tour of Africa (14 countries)
- 2/26/67 Albert Ayler at The Village Theatre, self-produced (recorded)
- 2/21/67 First Annual Malcolm X Grassroots Memorial at Hunter's Point, SF
- 3/67 Aretha Franklin's *I Never Loved a Man*
- 3/24/67 Jackie McLean records *New and Old Gospel* (w/ Ornette)
- 4/11/67 Powell wins special election for seat
- 4/67 First issue of *Black Panther* newspaper
- 4/21/67 McCoy Tyner records 1<sup>st</sup> post-Trane LP *The Real McCoy*, Blue Note
- 4/21-23/67 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Fisk U. Writer's Conference, Baraka stars
- 4/26/67 Archie Shepp records *The Magic of Ju-Ju*
- 4/28/67 Muhammad Ali refuses induction, stripped of title same day
- 5/2/67 Armed Black Panthers appear at CA state capitol to protest Mulford Act
- 5/67 OBAC founded
- 5/67 H Rap Brown elected SNCC chairman
- 5/67 RHooks, DTWard awarded \$434G from Ford Foundation for theater co.
- 5/67 Aretha Franklin's *Respect*
- 5/67 Miles Davis Quintet records *Sorcerer*
- 5/16-17/67 Police shootout at Texas Southern: 1 cop dead, 3 wounded, 488 arrests
- 5/22/67 Langston Hughes dies
- 5/26/67 Rubin "Hurricane" Carter and John Artis convicted of murder
- 6/67 Monterey Pop Festival
- 6/67 Release of Hendrix LP *Are You Experienced?*
- 6/67 SF State agrees that curriculum must change
- 6/67 Newton drafts Carmichael as BPP prime minister
- 6/67 The Black House under Bullins and Cleaver announced in *Negro Digest*
- 6/67 *Black and Beautiful Soul and Madness* LP announced in *Negro Digest*
- 6/67 Linda Jones' *Hypnotized*
- 6/20/67 Ali convicted of refusal of induction, given 5 years, passport taken
- 6/21/67 17 arrested for Wilkins assassination plot
- 6/29-7/2/67 2<sup>nd</sup> Black Arts Convention, Detroit
- 6-7/67 Miles Davis Quintet records *Nefertiti*
- 7/6/67 Biafran war begins (3 years)

- 7/12-16/67 Newark rebellion
- 7/17/67 Coltrane dies
- 7/20-23/67 Black Power Conference. Newark (1000 delegates)
- 7/22/67 Clifford Thornton records *Freedom & Unity*; released 1969, *Free Huey*
- 7/22-27/67 Detroit rebellion
- 7/24/67 After Cambridge MD violence, H Rap Brown shot, charged
- 7/27/67 LBJ establishes Natl Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Comm)
- 7/67 CORE gets \$175G Ford Foundation grant for Cleveland project
- Late July-8/24 Wall of Respect painted, Chicago
- 8/67 John Coltrane Workshop series at Both/And in SF: D Garrett, club owner
- 8/67 Coltrane tribute at Meadows Club Chicago: Cohran, Jarman, Braxton +
- 9/67 Ocean Hill Brownsville community control district begins
- 9/8/67 Jackie McLean records *'Bout Soul*
- 9/18/67 United Blk Students for Action, San Jose State, charge racism (gm cncl'd)
- 9/18/67 Larry Young records *Contrasts*
- 10/2/67 Thurgood Marshall sworn in as U.S. Supreme Court justice
- 10/7/67 Ruby Doris Robinson dies
- 10/13/67 New Lafayette Theater opens with Ron Milner's *Who's Got His Own*
- 10/21/67 Archie Shepp *Live at Donameschingen* LP (*One for Trane* pt 1 & 2)
- 10/67 Miriam Makeba's *Pata Pata* charts R&B (13 wks) and pop
- 10/28/67 Huey Newton shot and arrested
- 11/7/67 Carl Stokes and Richard Hatcher elected mayors of Cleveland, Gary
- Fall 67 Affro-Arts Theater founded (12/2/67 public dedication), Chicago
- Late 1967 *I Paid My Dnes* published by Babs
- 11/22-23/67 LA Black Youth Conference; Olympic Boycott workshop
- 11/67 *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* published
- 11/67 Jazz Musicians Ass. (John Lewis, Ron Jefferson) concerts at Smalls
- 11/27-30/67 *Inflated Tear* recorded
- 12/1/67 McCoy Tyner records *Tender Moments* LP, incl *Man from Tanganyika*
- 12/67 *I Paid My Dnes* published by Babs
- 12/67 Afro-American Arts Festival educ benefit Queens: Pharoah, Pullen-Graves
- 12/10/67 Otis Redding dies
- 12/15/67 NYC press conference of Olympic Project for Human Rights
- 12/22/67 Jackie McLean LP *Demon's Dance*, his last till 1972 (& last Blue Note)
- 12/29/67 Tyrone Washington records *Natural Essence*
- 1967 Third World Press founded
- 1967 Nikki Giovanni publishes *Black Feeling, Black Talk* (Blk Dialogue Press)
- 1967 Carolyn Rodgers publishes *Paper Soul* (3<sup>rd</sup> World)
- 1967 Jewel Latimore's *Images in Black* (3<sup>rd</sup> World)
- 1967 LeRoi Jones publishes *Black Music* (Morrow)
- 1968**
- 1968 *The Black Power Revolt* published, Floyd Barbour, editor
- 1968 *William Styron's Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond* (Beacon)

1968 Julius Nyerere's *Uhuru na Ujamaa*, Oxford  
 Winter 68 Merritt College offers Afro-American Studies degree (2 yr)  
 1/2/68 Negro Ensemble Company's 1<sup>st</sup> play (P Weiss) opens, M Schultz directs  
 1/14/68 *Kenyatta Presents Kenyatta* concert at Judson  
 1/29/68 Archie Shepp records *The Way Ahead*  
 1/30/68 Tet Offensive in Vietnam  
 1/68 Clifford Jordan starts Frontier Records  
 1/68 Warner Bros. buys Atlantic Records  
 1/68 AACM shows at Harper Theater, Chicago  
 1/68 Black artists try to help save Redd Foxx's LA club: Mr. B, Cos, Rawls +  
 1/68 *Negro Digest* symposium on The Black Aesthetic  
 1/68 Hendrix's *Axis: Bold As Love* LP released  
 1/68 Randy Weston moves to Morocco  
 1/68 Sly and the Family Stone's *Dance to the Music, Impressions' We're a Winner, James Brown's There Was a Time*  
 Early 68 Dillard U has Afro-American Arts Festival, including Cannonball  
 2/68 Boycott of segregated NY Athletic Club meet (successful)  
 2/68 AACM shows at Lincoln Community Center  
 2/68 Cohran at Affro-Arts Fri-Sun: *Blues for Mr Charlie* plays there  
 2/68 Nathan Hare hired at SF State  
 2/68 *Soul On Ice* published  
 2/68 The Delfonics' *La La Means I Love You*  
 2/8/68 Orangeburg Massacre (3 killed, 30 wounded)  
 2/17/68 5000 attend "Free Huey" rally at Oakland Auditorium  
 2/21/68 Malcolm X tribute at IS 201  
 2 or 3/68 Club Jest Us presents Roland Alexander at Studio O Brooklyn  
 2 or 3/68 BPP of NC merges with House of Umoja  
 Early 68 "Bold New Black Worlds," Afro-Arts Cultural Center music/poetry series  
 3/1/68 Kerner Commission report issued  
 3/1/68 Building takeover at Howard U.; lasts for days  
 3/68 "The Black University" cover story in *Negro Digest*  
 3/68 Benefit for Baraka at Affro-Arts  
 3/68 Marriage of Miriam Makeba and Stokely Carmichael; move to Guinea  
 68  
 3/4/68 Infamous Hoover memo: "prevent coalition of blk natlsts, black Messiah"  
 3/9/68 Herbie Hancock records *Speak Like A Child* LP  
 3/10/68 Afro Brothers show, Philly Town Hall: JMac, Woody, Visitors, Kenyatta  
 3/16/68 My Lai massacre  
 3/31/68 Founding of RNA  
 3/31/68 LBJ announces he will not stand for re-election  
 4/4/68 MLK killed  
 4/4-7/68 Riots and rebellions across US  
 4/6/68 Protests at Tuskegee re ROTC, regulations +; campus closed 2 wks

- 4/7/68 Nina Simone records *Why? The King of Love is Dead*
- 4/68 U of Louisville protests re black studies, admissions, faculty, scholarships
- Spring 68 Robert Williams returns to US
- Spring 68 Chicago State College students produce Black Arts Festival
- Spring 68 First issue of *The Cricket*
- 4/68 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Fisk U. Writer's Conference
- 5/3/68 Northwestern protest re Black Studies
- 5/10-11/68 Yale Black Studies conference
- 5/15-17/68 Miles Davis records *Miles in the Sky* (also 1/16/68)
- 5/17/68 600 Guard & police fight blks in Burlington NC re hi school cheerleaders
- 5/17/68 McCoy Tyner records *African Village on Time for Tyner*
- 5/19/68 Last Poets come together at Mt. Morris Malcolm X tribute (7 cats, both)
- 5/23/68 Henry Dumas killed by NY transit cop
- 5/15-17/68 Miles Davis records *Miles in the Sky* (also 1/16/68)
- 5/27-6/4/68 "Black Power riots," Louisville KY, over arrests
- 5/68 Stax Records sold to Gulf & Western; Al Bell gets 10% of label
- 5/68 Aretha Franklin's *Respect*; Jerry Butler's *Never Give You Up*
- 6/5/68 RFK shot
- 6/68 Hampton Jazz Festival (first at a black college)
- 6/68 Afro Brothers shows at Heritage House, Philly: thru August
- 6/68 Max Roach records *Members Don't Get Weary* (Atlantic)
- 6/68 James Brown's *Licking Stick* and *America Is My Home*, Hugh Masekela's *Grazing in the Grass*; The Dells' *Stay In My Corner* (2<sup>nd</sup> version)
- 6/9/68 Jim Brown throws Eva Marie Bohn-Chin off balcony
- 6/68 Miles begins recording *Filles de Kilimanjaro* (also 9/68)
- 6/21-23/68 Black Political Convention, Newark
- 7/2/68 Charles Tolliver's *Paper Man* LP (Blk Lion) w/Bartz Herbie Ron Joe C
- 7/15-16/68 Thousands rally at Oakland courthouse for Huey Newton
- 7/23/68 Shootout in Cleveland, arrest of Fred Ahmed Evans
- 7/68 Eddie Floyd's *I've Never Found a Girl*
- 1968 Black Artists Group founded in St. Louis
- 8/68 Max Roach and Miles Davis groups at Count Basie's in Harlem
- Summer 68 Roy Innis becomes CORE natl director
- 8/25-28/68 Democratic convention in Chicago; massive violence
- 8/29-9/1/68 Black Power Conference, Philadelphia (3100 delegates)
- 9/68 NYC Teacher's Strike over Ocean Hill begins
- 9/68 Founding of New York High School Student Union
- 9/68 Black Studies Dept begins at SF State; major approved 10/68
- 9/68 Cornell agrees to establish Afro-American Studies (for fall 69)
- 9/68 James Brown's *Say It Loud – I'm Black and I'm Proud*
- Fall 68 "Toward a Black University" conference at Howard U.
- 9/9/68 Violent sit-in by 250 at U of Illinois re housing and aid: bad faith
- 9/20/68 *Ghetto Music* recorded by Eddie Gale

9/29/68 Firing of George Murray at SF State sets off sustained protests  
 10/68 The Dell's *Always Together: Johnnie Taylor's Who's Making Love*  
 10/68 Walter Rodney banned from Jamaica; '68-'74 teaching in Tanzania  
 10/2.22/68 *Black Woman* recorded by Sonny Sharrock  
 10/16/68 Black Power salute of Tommie Smith and John Carlos  
 10-11/68 *Black Fire* released (Jones/Neal book)  
 11/4/68 San Fernando Valley State protests (19 felony convictions)  
 11/5/68 AC Powell re-elected  
 11/5/68 Richard Nixon elected U.S. president  
 11/6/68 Student strike begins at San Francisco State  
 11/8/68 Lou Donaldson records *Say It Loud* LP  
 11/68 Hendrix's *Electric Ladyland* LP released  
 11/68 Herbie Hancock Sextet formed  
 11/68 At Slugs for 1 wk each: Pharoah, Bobby Hutch, Lee Morgan, McCoy  
 11/68 James Brown show at MSQ w/ Count Basie, Ramsey Lewis, Hank  
 Ballard  
 11/68 90 black students expelled at U of Wisconsin after "destructive" acts  
 11/68 Eldridge Cleaver skips bail  
 11/68 Club Jest Us presents Kenny Dorham + 10 pieces Thanksgiving  
 11/68 Temptations' *Cloud Nine*  
 12/68 Sly and the Family Stone's *Everyday People*  
 11 or 12/68 Flying Dutchman Records formed  
 12/68 African Jazz Ensemble starts blk music history school concerts,  
 Baltimore  
 12/11/68 Blk Student Movement at UNC issues 23 demands  
 12/26/68 Jitu Weusi reads poem on Julius Lester's WBAI program  
 12/27/68 Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso arrested by Brazilian junta  
 1968 *Black Pride* by Don L. Lee (Broadside)  
 1968 *Black Judgment* by Nikki Giovanni (Broadside)  
 1968 *Black Essence* by Jewel Latimore (3<sup>rd</sup> World)  
**1969**  
 1969 Robert Allen publishes *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*  
 1969 85 black student protests at "white" universities during year  
 Early 1969 Student-sponsored Cal State Jazz Festival: Tapscott's band, Crusaders +  
 1/69 BPP free breakfast program, Oakland  
 1/69 *Young, Gifted and Black* the play opens  
 1/8/69 286 arrests and many injuries as police break up rally at SF Valley State  
 1/8/69 Brandeis building takeover re Black Studies (10 days)  
 1/14/69 *Izipho Zam* recorded  
 1/16/69 30 students end sit in at U of Pitt re Black Studies+  
 1/17/69 Murder of Bunchy Carter and John Huggins  
 2/3/69 Rent strike begins at Carr Square projects St Louis; settled in October  
 2/4/69 Lonne Elder's *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men* opens, NEC  
 2/7/69 Demands for Black Studies at Hunter and SUNY Stony Brook  
 2/69 Strike at UC Berkeley for Ethnic Studies (Blk Studies already promised)

- 2/69 Protests at U of Illinois re Black Studies
- 2/69 Dionne's *This Girl's In Love With You*
- 2/12/69 National Guard at U of Wisconsin: protests 1 week old, 1000s protest
- 2/13/69 Police fight students at Duke re Black studies
- 2/14/69 *Karma* recorded
- 2/17/69 SUNY Stony Brook agrees to Black Studies
- 2/18/69 Mile Davis records *In A Silent Way*
- 2/20/69 Black Studies protests at Roosevelt, E Michigan, Clark U (other protests)
- 2/27/69 Student "rampage" at U of Wisconsin
- 2/27/69 End of 3 day building takeover at Rutgers re Black Studies +
- 2/28/69 Vassar announces Black Studies program
- Spring 69 Xavier U. Black Arts Festival (Willie T, H Mann name acts)
- Spring 69 Oliver Nelson tours Africa for State Dept
- Spring 69 Corcoran Gallery DC Coltrane tribute: Pharoah, L Neal, Jazz Iconoclasts
- 3/69 Temptations' *Runaway Child, Running Wild*; Jerry Butler's *Ouly The Strong Survive*
- 3/69 Racial clashes at Ferris State College, MI; 20 demands
- 3/69 Protests at Duke, UNC, NC A&T re cafeteria workers strike, Blk Studies
- 3/6/69 Tim Peebles get blasted by his bomb, SF State
- 3/11/69 "Rampage" in south-central LA high schools re police brutality
- 3/15/69 Blacks at Williams College demand cultural center, black studies. 13  
more
- 3/30/69 Gary Bartz records *Home!* at Left Bank concert (Milestone)
- 3/31/69 Boycott of downtown stores (following gunfight) begins in Cairo, IL
- 4/69 Harvard strike
- 4/69 Peak of U.S. troop strength in Vietnam: 543,400
- 4 or 5/69 Afro Brothers present The Visitors at Sonny Driver's, Philly
- 4/69 *Cissy Strut*
- 4/69 Herbie Hancock records *The Prisoner* LP (last Blue Note)
- 4/1/69 Chicago BPP starts free breakfast program
- 4/1/69 Panther 21 arrested in NYC
- 4/18/69 McCoy Tyner at Shaw U Blk Arts Festival (*African Village, L Madimba*)
- 4/19-20/69 Building takeover at Cornell; famous photo of Eric Evans w/ bandolier
- 4/27/69 Building takeover at St Louis U re Black Studies
- 4/28/69 Voorhees College (Denmark, SC) bldng takeover (call us Malcolm X U)
- 4/28/69 IS 275 in Brooklyn bricked by 200 youth
- 5/2/69 *Black Rhythm Happeniug* recorded by Eddie Gale
- 5/3/69 Lincoln U (Pa) announces Black Studies for fall 69, says 1<sup>st</sup> at blk  
college
- 5/4/69 Charles Gordone's *No Place to be Somebody* opens
- 5/69 Art Ensemble exodus to France
- 5/69 Edwin Hawkins' Singers' *Oh Happy Day*; B.B. King's *Why I Sing the Blues*; Junior Walker's *What Does It Take*
- 5/21/69 Alex Rackley torture-murder
- Spring 69 BPP purges

- Spring 69 3<sup>rd</sup> Berkeley Jazz Festival, BSU sponsor: Roach, Shepp, Cannon, Rollins, Nina, Albert King, Haynes, Herbie, E Hawkins, Black Messengers
- Spring 69 Secret bombing of Cambodia by U.S. begins
- 6/2/69 C. Tolliver's *The Ringer* LP rec London (BL) w/Cowell Hopps Novosel
- 6/5/69 Stanley Cowell records *Blues for the Viet Cong* LP in London (Polydor)
- 6/15/69 Hoover: BPP "greatest threat to internal security of US" alt date 7/14/70
- 6/26/69 Stokely resigns from BPP
- 6/69 Impressions' *Choice of Colors*
- 7/69 Chi-Lites' *Let Me Be The Man My Daddy Was*
- 7-8/69 Pan-African Cultural Festival, Algiers
- 7/29/69 Archie Shepp *Live at the Pan-African Festival* recorded
- Summer 69 3<sup>rd</sup> Harlem Cultural Festival: concert w/ Max/Abbey, Tunji, 5<sup>th</sup> Dimension
- Summer 69 360 Degree Experience at Nucleus Exp. Theater: Moncur, R Alexander
- Summer 69 1<sup>st</sup> Morgan State Jazz festival: big names, Rahsaan, Nina, Hugh, Freddie
- 1969 Institute for Positive Education founded
- 8/69 *Ebony* magazine special issue "The Black Revolution"
- 8/69 Woody Shaw's Concert Ensemble Sundays 5-9 at Village Vanguard
- 8/69 *Bitches Brew* sessions
- 8/69 Isaac Hayes' *Hot Buttered Soul* released; Johnnie Taylor's *I Could Never Be President* charts
- 8/11/69 Grachan Moncur records *New Africa*
- 8/12/69 Art Ensemble of Chicago records *Message From Our Folks*
- 8/12/69 Archie Shepp records *Yasmina, A Black Woman*
- 8/16/69 Archie Shepp records *Blasé*
- 8/15-17/69 Woodstock rock festival
- 8/16-24/69 NY Jazz Festival, Randall's Island, mostly vocals
- Fall 69 UMass Afro-American Studies begins classes; approved dept as of 9/70
- 9/69 CA Board of Regents fires Angela Davis from UCLA as Communist (appeal)
- 9/25/69 Stanley Cowell records *Brilliant Circles* LP (Polydor)
- 10/69 Elaine Brown's *Seize the Time* LP
- 10/69 Young Lords organized, NYC (?)
- 10/69 Staple Singers record *When Will We Be Paid*
- 10/3/69 Bobby Hutcherson records *Now!* LP
- 10/21-22/69 Leon Thomas records *Spirits Known and Unknown*
- 10/27/69 Malcolm X University opens, Durham NC (Betty speaks at opening)
- 11/69 *Black Scholar* inaugural issue; Nathan Hare, Robert Chrisman publishers
- 11/69 Jazz Musicians Association opens record store on Ave A
- 11/69 K Dorham leads "New Mood in Jazz" seminar for NYU Inst. AA Affairs
- 11/69 Nina Simone's *To Be Young, Gifted, and Black*
- 11/69 My Lai massacre story hits U.S. press
- 11/10/69 65 black students sit in at U of Nebraska re black student services
- 12/4/69 Murder of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark

12/8/69 Police assault on LA BPP office, extensive sustained gunfire  
 12/4-6/69 2<sup>nd</sup> annual conference of Afr & Afro-American Studies at AUC (R Long)  
 12/11/69 Recording of *Kawaida* (Mtume, A Heath, Cherry, Hancock's group)  
 12/69 Harambee Festival of Arts at IS 201: R Alexander, Milford, N Qamar  
 12/69 Benny Powell's "The Story of Jazz" at Judson: Leon, F Foster, Mabern  
 12/31/69 The East grand opening  
 12/31/69 Jimi Hendrix's *Band of Gypsys* LP recorded at Fillmore East NY  
 1969 Fela Ransome-Kuti spends year in LA w/ Sandra Izidore  
 1969 Phyl Garland publishes *The Sound of Soul*  
 1969 Publication of Cabral writings *Revolution in Guinea*  
 1969 Or early 1970: Oyo-Tunji Village SC founded by Yoruba Kingdom  
 1969 *Don't Cry, Scream!* by Don L. Lee (Broadside)  
 1969 *Songs of a Blackbird* by Carolyn Rodgers (3<sup>rd</sup> World)

## 1970

1970 Affro-Arts Theater closes  
 1970 Toni Cade publishes *The Black Woman*  
 1970 *Small Talk at 125<sup>th</sup> and Lenox*, book and LP (Flying Dutchman)  
 1970 Port of Call NYC: Tolliver, B Ervin, Moncur  
 1970 *Wali and the Afro-Caravan* LP on Solid State  
 1970 Black Musicians' Association pickets Oscars, only 3 blacks in band  
 1970 Betty Carter forms Bet-Car Records, releases LP *Betty Carter*  
 1/70 Cannonball Adderley's *Country Preacher* charts R&B (and pop)  
 1/70 Donny Hathaway's *The Ghetto*; Les McCann and Eddie Harris' *Compared to What*; Santana's *Evil Ways*; Delfonics' *Didn't I Blow Your Mind*  
 1/70 Pharoah, Cecil Taylor at Slugs  
 1/70 Curt Flood sues baseball re: reserve clause  
 2/9/70 McCoy Tyner records *Extensions* (incl. *Message From the Nile*)  
 2/10/70 900 arrested at Mississippi Valley State (Itta Bena)  
 2/22/70 BPP benefit in Brklyn: Romas Orch., E Gale, Pharoah, McCoy, Shepp +  
 3/2-6/70 5<sup>th</sup> NYU jazz festival: *Slave Ship* band, McCoy, Woody; L Ridley prod.  
 3/9/70 Ralph Featherstone and Che Payne blown up in car  
 3/21/70 ATA/CBA benefit concert at LIU: Shepp, Alice Coltrane, Sam Rivers  
 4/70 El Chicano's *Viva Tirado*  
 4/30/70 Nixon announces invasion of Cambodia  
 5/1/70 25,000 rally in New Haven for BPP members on trial  
 5/1/70 Music Inc records LP at Slugs  
 5/4/70 Ohio Nat'l Guard kills four white students at Kent State  
 5/4/70 H. Rap Brown no-shows for trial, skips bail  
 5/4/70 Charles Gordone awarded Pulitzer Prize  
 5/11-13/70 Black Arts Festival, West Point, MS (in memory of Featherstone), FST  
 5/14/70 Police kill 2 students, wound 12 at Jackson State, MS  
 5/70 Aretha Franklin's *Spirit in the Dark*; Eric Burdon and War's *Spill the Wine*

- 5/70 *Negro Digest* becomes *Black World*
- 6/16/70 Kenneth Gibson elected mayor of Newark, NJ
- 7/1/70 Pharoah Sanders records *Sammun Bukmun Umyun*
- Summer 70 Coltrane festival by Philly Jazz Soc. and Blk Awareness Soc. at St Joseph's College: Shepp big band, Alice Coltrane w/ Pharoah, Visitors
- Summer 70 Clifford Thornton, J Cortez, Rashied at Carnegie, self-produced
- 8/5/70 Huey Newton released from jail
- 8/7/70 Marin County Courthouse shootout
- Late 8/70 Jazz & People's Movement protests
- 9/70 *Soledad Brother* published
- 9/3-7/70 Congress of African People gathering in Atlanta (2700 delegates)
- 9/10/70 McCoy Tyner records *Asante* w/Mtume Jabali Buster A White
- 9/18/70 Jimi Hendrix dies
- 9/19/70 Cannonball records *Price You Gotta Pay to Be Free* at Monterey Jazz Fest
- Fall 70 C Thornton and D Burrell off to Europe
- Fall 70 Jazz Interactions NY gets 50G from NY Arts Cncl for school shows
- Fall 70 Soul Bowl 70 at Tulane Stadium: Isaac, Jr Walker,
- 10/70 *Black News* inaugural issue
- 10/70 *Super Bad*: Santana's 1<sup>st</sup> LP *Santana* released
- 10/2-9/70 Black Arts Festival at Towson State by BSU: Olatunji closes
- 10/4/70 Janis Joplin ODS
- 10/13/70 Angela Davis captured
- 11/6/70 Leon Thomas (w Oliver Nelson) in Berlin
- 11/7/70 Clifford Thornton records *The Panther and the Lash* in Paris
- 11/11/70 *Music Inc & Big Band* LP recorded (1<sup>st</sup> Strata release?)
- 11/11-15/70 At 2<sup>nd</sup> Black Expo, Chi: Quincy, Cannon – Byrd, Herbie, Nina, Flack +: create Institute of Black American Music
- 11/19-20/70 *Harlem Bush Music* recorded; also 1/71 session
- 11/25/70 Pharoah Sanders records *Thembi* LP (also 1/12/71)
- 11/70 Stanley Turrentine records *Sngar*, his 1<sup>st</sup> CTI LP
- 11/70 Curtis Mayfield's *If There's a Hell Below*, The Emotions' *Black Christmas*; Santana's *Black Magic Woman*
- Late 70 Andrew Cyrille Ens. at C Cullen Library: Sam, Lonnie, C Sullivan
- Late 70 Ed Williams moves from WLIB to WCBS
- Late 70 Don L Lee w/ Gallery Music Ensemble at St Xavier College, Chicago
- 12/8-9/70 Woody Shaw records *Blackstone Legacy* (Contemporary)
- 1970 Frank Wright records *Uhru na Umoja*
- 1970 *We Walk the Way of the New World* by Don L. Lee (Broadside)
- 1971**
- 1971 Publication of *Beneath the Underdog*
- 1971 Pan-African Games held at Duke U (Leroy Walker)
- 1971 Nikki Giovanni *Truth Is On Its Way* LP released, Right-On Records
- 1971 Wanda Robinson's *Black Ivory* LP (Perception)
- 1971 Don L. Lee publishes *Dynamite Voices* (Broadside)

- 1971 The Last Poets' *This Is Madness*  
1971 Rafikki's club active NYC  
1971 Count Basie's *Afrique* LP  
1971 Idi Amin military coup in Uganda  
1971 *Fela Ransome-Kuti and the Africa 70 Live with Ginger Baker* released  
1/71 Redd Foxx's club burns down  
1/71 At Kimako's: Connors, Garnett, J Spaulding, Shepp on wknds  
1/71 Stylistics' *You're A Big Girl Now*: 1<sup>st</sup> of 5 hits from 1<sup>st</sup> LP (charts to 8/72)  
1/71 Wilson Pickett's *Don't Let the Green Grass Fool You*  
Early 71 C Garnett forms Universal Force: Kiane, Khaliq, Connors, Mixon  
Early 71 Joe Lee, Roland A, Mixon perform at Baraka book party at Kimako's  
Early 71 James Brown's highly successful African tour  
Early 71 G Moncur teaches children at Community Thing Project, Harlem  
Early 71 CTI starts singles line  
2/71 Newton-Cleaver dispute on television  
2/71 Marvin Gaye's *What's Going On*; Santana's *Oye Como Va*  
2 or 3/71 Festival at Kimako's w/ Ntu Troop, Joe Lee, dance company  
2 & 3/71 Blk Student Union, Boston, calls citywide strikes re seg, history, dashikis  
Spring 71 *Mwandishi* released by H. Hancock; contains *Ostinato (Suite for Angela)*  
Spring 71 At Both/And: Hancock Sextet 3 wks, w/ Freddie 1 wk; L Morgan 2 wks  
3/6/71 *Soul to Soul* concert film recorded, Accra, Ghana  
3/8/71 Ali-Frazier I at Madison Square Garden  
3/14/71 AAS and Mosque concert at Columbia: JMac, T Washington, A Jamal +  
3/71 Universal Black Force at Manhattan Comm College, NYU, MUSE  
3/71 Cal Massey's Jazz Revue at East Village In; Sun Ra Sundays & Mondays  
3/29/71 Lt William Calley convicted of murder for My Lai massacre  
3/30-4/10/71 Sharrock at Village Gate  
3 & 4/71 Gallery Ens gigs, incl 4/1 benefit for IPE and OBAC at Dunbar High  
4/71 *Sweetback's Badass Song* opens  
4/71 Chi-Lites' (*For God's Sake*) *Give More Power To The People*  
4/71 Yusef, McCoy, Milt Jackson do 1 wk each at Slugs  
4/71 Chalice of Golden Thought (Jami, R Burton) Mondays at C&B Studios, NYC  
4/71 Black Experience Family "play" at NEC Theater: Bonner, D Kenyatta  
4/7-8/71 Max Roach records *Lift Every Voice And Sing* LP w/ JC White Singers  
4/15/71 At Muse: Thornton Vishnu C Ward Rashied  
4/17/71 Sam Napier murdered  
4/17/71 CBA Ensemble at Hall of Fame Playhouse, Bronx; Bed-Stuy 5/9  
4/19-20/71 Gil Scott-Heron records *Pieces of a Man* LP  
Spring 71 African Continuum (org) at Powell Hall St Louis: Hemphill's band feat.  
Spring 71 Black Week at Baruch College w/ Last Poets, Eric Gravatt  
Spring 71 Last Poets and Milford Graves at IS 201  
Spring 71 Gil Scott-Heron, Visitors at Swarthmore, student produced  
Spring 71 Quincy J leads Oscar band, 16 of 43 musicians black

- Spring 71 Albert Ayler Memorial Concert, Cleveland, w/ wife and child attending  
5/17/71 Archie Shepp records *Things Have Got To Change* LP  
5/71 Cheyney State Black Culture Week: Olatunji, Visitors, Mayfield, E Harris
- Spr-Sum 71 Funkadelic records *Maggot Brain*  
6/5/71 Aiye Niwaju Essence of Blackness Ens at Cami: McBee C Bey Connors+
- 6/5/71 BSU of Essex Comm Coll, Baltimore concert w/ Sounds Inc, prison band  
6/71 Karenga convicted of assault, false imprisonment; given 1 to 10 yrs  
6/71 Publication of *Pentagon Papers*  
671 Undisputed Truth's *Smiling Faces Sometimes*  
6/28/71 US Supreme Ct overturns Ali's conviction for refusing draft induction  
7/71 *Shaft* opens, soundtrack released; Marvin Gaye's *Mercy Mercy Me*; The Chi-Lites' *Have You Seen Her*
- 7/6/71 Death of Louis Armstrong  
8/71 Harlem Music Center inaugurated  
8/71 War's *All Day Music*
- Summer 71 Art Ensemble of Chicago returns to US  
Summer 71 LBJS DC benefit concert at Howard U: Freddie, Lee, McCoy, Betty C +  
Summer 71 Blackman's Development Center reopens club, DC: McCoy opening wk  
Summer 71 Kuntu, Jimmy Stewart's band, in concert, Philly  
Summer 71 Coppin State College Jazz Society brings Joe Lee Wilson  
Summer 71 Universal Black Force every Fri & Sat at Generation Pub Brklyn  
Summer 71 A Niwaju Ijinle Dudu (Ess of Blkness) at Cami Hall  
8/21/71 George Jackson and five others killed at San Quentin  
8/29/71 Recording of *Alkebu-lan* at The East by Mtume's Umoja Ensemble  
8/31/71 *Blacknuss* (the tune) recorded by Rahsaan (rest of LP 9/8/71)  
9/11/71 Attica rebellion begins  
9/12/71 Coltrane concert Town Hall NYC: Elvin, McCoy, Pharoah, Alice, Shepp  
9/17/71 Lee Morgan records *Lee Morgan* LP (incl *Angela*)  
9/71 Grover Washington's Kudu LP *Inner City Blues* recorded (hits early 72)  
10/16/71 H. Rap Brown arrested after armed robbery of Red Carpet Bar  
10/31/71 CBA band "Spiritual Black Happening" at Belrose Living Rm, Brklyn  
10/71 Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway's *Be Real Black for Me*; Marvin Gaye's *Inner City Blues*
- Fall 71 *Infant Eyes* released by Doug Carn  
10/71 Staple Singers' *Respect Yourself*; *Theme from Shaft* charts  
11/24/71 Pharoah Sanders records *Black Unity* LP  
11/71 Aretha Franklin's *Rock Steady*; Sly and the Family Stone's *Family Affair*; Black Ivory's *Don't Turn Around*; Isaac Hayes' *Black Moses* released  
12/71 Bobby Womack's *That's the Way I Feel About Cha*, Al Green's *Let's Stay Together*; Jerry Butler's *Ain't Understanding Mellow*  
12/71 Nia (BSU) of U of Chicago presents Art Ensemble twice  
12/71 Leon Thomas presented by Coppin State Jazz Society, Baltimore

**1972**

- 1972 Stevie Wonder's *Talking Book*
- 1972 Gil Scott-Heron publishes *The Nigger Factory*
- 1972 LPs Gil Scott-Heron's *Free Will* and *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* (Flying Dutchman)
- 1972 Master Brotherhood splits: Reid Rigby Walker gig at colleges as Sadka
- 1972 Jazz Crusaders become The Crusaders
- 1972 Pharoah records *Wisdom Through Music* and *Village of the Pharoahs*
- 1972 Fela releases four LPs including *Shakara*
- 1972 Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* published
- 1972 In *Furman v Georgia*, Supreme Ct invalidates death penalty in most states
- 1/72 War's *Slippin' Into Darkness*
- 1/72 Hugh Masekela records *Home is Where the Music Is* (jazz dbl LP)
- 1/72 McCoy Tyner records *Sahara*, 1<sup>st</sup> Milestone LP (incl *Ebony Queen*)
- 1/24-26/72 *Attica Blues* recorded by Archie Shepp
- 1/27/72 Death of Mahalia Jackson
- 2/19/72 Lee Morgan killed
- 2/72 *Dogon A.D.* recorded by Julius Hemphill
- 2/72 Angela Davis trial begins
- 3/2/72 Gil Scott-Heron records *Free Will* LP
- 3/14/72 Linda Jones dies
- 3/17/72 Alice Coltrane, Leon Thomas, Contemp Jazz Quintet at UMich
- 3/72 National Black Political Convention in Gary, IN (6000 attend)
- 3/72 1<sup>st</sup> annual Black Poetry Festival at Southern U, Baton Rouge
- 3/72 Aretha Franklin's *Day Dreaming; Ask Me What You Want* (Millie Jackson's 1<sup>st</sup> top ten)
- 3-5/72 *Black on Black* concert series at Carnegie; Chris White led, IJS sponsor
- 4/15-17/72 *Jubilee* blk music festival at Wesleyan: Cole Blackwell Thornton Shepp
- +
- 4/15/72 At Unity House Brklyn: Massey's Jazz Review, S Rivers, R Alex/Kiane Z
- 4/29-30/72 CBA Symposium at Bed-Stuy Rest Ctr: J Owens, D Byrd, B Barron +
- 4/72 *Black Spirits* poetry LP released (Black Forum)
- 4/72 Jr. Walker's *Walk in the Night*; Roberta Flack's 1<sup>st</sup> *Time Ever I Saw Yr Face*; Black Ivory's *You And I*
- 4/72 Malombo at Rafiki's
- 4/72 Nia & Chicago Front for Jazz do wkly Air concerts thru summer
- 4/72 Imamu Amiri Baraka's LP *It's Nation Time* (Black Forum)
- 4-5/72 Studio We concerts: Rashied, C Jordan, Shepp, 360 Degree, Rev Ens
- 5/6/72 Massey and Romas Orch do *Black Liberation Movement* at Hofstra
- 5/72 First African Liberation Day
- 6/72 Delfonics' *Tell Me This Is a Dream*; Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway's *Where Is The Love*
- 6/4/72 Angela Davis acquitted

- 6/17/72 Watergate break-in
- 6/26-27/72 Norman Connors records *Dance of Magic* LP (Buddah)
- Summer 72 "It's Nation Time," Kimako's outdoor performance series in Harlem
- 7/3-10/72 NY Musicians Festival at Studio We. Rivbea, Slugs, Harlem Mus Ctr +
- 7/9/72 Soul Sunday Picnic at City Ctr of Music & Drama: B Barron band
- 7/23-8/5/72 *Soul at the Center* Lincoln Ctr: Rahsaan, Nina, Cecil Taylor, Donny H +
- 7 & 8/72 At MUSE: Shepp, Massey, Lester Forte, Stella Mars
- 8/72 *Superfly* opens
- 8/72 Donald Byrd does CBA benefit at Old West Church, Boston
- 8/72 B Taylor, J Byard, Mongo S at Elma Lewis School, Natl Ctr of AA Arts
- 8/72 Fundraiser for Black Studies at Columbia: B Barron, R Hanna, J Garrison
- 9/1-4/72 CAP congress in San Diego; 2500 attend
- 9/1-4/72 NY Musicians Association festival in parks, at Rivbea & We
- 9/11/72 Piano Choir, M'boom, NY Bass Choir concert in Central Pk
- 9/25-27/72 Archie Shepp records *The Cry of My People*
- 9/72 *Message from Mozambique* recorded by Juju
- 9/72 At V Vanguard 1 wk each: Rahsaan, McCoy, Pharoah, Mingus, Monk
- Fall 1972 *Spirit of the New Land* released by Doug Carn
- 10/72 *Gorilla My Love* published
- 10/72 Temptations' *Papa Was a Rollin' Stone*
- 10/72 Amilcar Cabral given honorary doctorate by Lincoln U (Pa)
- 10/72 Al Bell purchases Stax Records
- 10/28/72 Piano Choir records *Handscapes* LP
- Late 1972 *Live at The East* released by Pharoah
- 11/16/72 Police kill two Southern U students during protests
- 11/29/72 Stanley Cowell records *Illusion Suite* for ECM
- 12/72 360 Degree do Cal Massey benefits in Brklyn
- 12/72 Concerts at Orisa Communications, 25 E 4<sup>th</sup>: Studio We folks
- 12/72 The Needle's Eye NYC acts: Betty C, C Payne, H Mabern
- 12/72 Sam Rivers and Boston Art Ens at NYU
- 12/72 CBA and Jazz Coalition show Boston: Byard, Marion, Bos Art Ens
- 12/72 Michael Manley elected Prime Minister of Jamaica
- 12/72 War's *The World Is A Ghetto*; Bobby Womack's *Harry Hippie*
- 1972 Nikki Giovanni publishes *My House: Poems* (Morrow)
- 1972 Johari Amini's *An African Frame of Reference* (Inst. of Pos. Ed)
- 1973**
- 1973 Nikki Giovanni's *Like a Ripple On a Pond*, Niktom Records
- 1973 Broadside issues Madhubuti's *From Plan to Planet & The Book of Life*
- 1973 Combined Black Publishers organized
- 1973 Lonnie Liston Smith signs w/ Flying Dutchman
- 1973 The Crusaders release *The 2<sup>nd</sup> Crusade* on Blue Thumb
- 1973 Leon Thomas' *Full Circle* LP, w/ *It's My Life I'm Fighting For*
- 1973 Billy Harper's *Capra Black* LP on Strata East

- 1973 Fela releases *Afrodisiac* and *Gentleman*
- 1/7/73 Mark Essex killed in New Orleans after shooting 19. killing 9 (5 cops)
- 1/20/73 Amilcar Cabral assassinated
- 1/27/73 Ceasefire in effect in Vietnam; official end to U.S.-Vietnam war
- 1/73 U.S. release of Wailers' *Catch a Fire*
- 2/25/73 Norman Connors records *Dark of Light* LP (Buddah)
- 4/9-13/73 Black Musicians Conference, UMass Amherst; Bill Hasson
- 4/13/73 Apollo CBA benefit w/ Machito, D Byrd, Gil Noble, La Lupe
- 5/1-2/73 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Festival, Southern U (Melvin Butler)
- 5/2/73 N.J. Turnpike shootout, Assata Shakur, S Acoli captured; Z Shakur killed
- 6/73 *Giving Love* by Voices of East Harlem; Bobby Womack's *Nobody Wants You When...*
- 6/23/73 Abbey Lincoln's *People In Me* LP recorded in Tokyo (released US 1978)
- 6/29-7/8/73 NY Musicians Festival, DuBose, Milford, Rashied, Noah H, J Sultan
- 7/7/73 McCoy Tyner LP *Enlightenment* recorded at Montreux
- 7/73 Aretha's *Angel*
- 8/73 Millie Jackson's *Hurts So Good*
- Fall 73 Lonnie Liston Smith's first LP *Astral Traveling* released
- 9/73 Pharoah's LP *Elevation* Recorded
- 9/11/73 CIA-aided military coup overthrows Salvador Allende govt in Chile
- 9/24/73 Republic of Guinea-Bissau proclaimed
- 9 & 10/73 Recording of Gil Scott-Heron's *Winter in America* LP (Strata East)
- Late 73 *Revelation* released by Doug Carn
- Late 73 *Headhunters* released
- 10/4/73 Six youth burn Evelyn Wagler to death in Roxbury MA
- 10/73 Norman Connors records *Love From The Sun* LP
- 10/73 Wailers release 2<sup>nd</sup> Island LP *Burnin'*
- 11/73 Stevie Wonder's *Living for the City*; Aretha Franklin's *Until You Come Back to Me*; Earth, Wind and Fire's *Keep Yr Head to the Sky*
- 12/10-11/73 Stanley Cowell records *Musa/Ancestral Streams* on Strata East
- 12/16/73 Melodic Arctet (A Abdullah, R Boykins, R Blank) 5<sup>th</sup> Av Studio Museum
- 1974**
- 1974 Breakup of Doug and Jean Carn
- 1974 Nikki Giovanni's *The Way I Feel* LP, Atlantic Records
- 1974 Diop's *African Origin of Civilization*, Lawrence Hill Bks (1955, 1967)
- 1974 Haile Selassie overthrown
- 1974 Walter Rodney returns to Guyana
- 1974 Publication of Hampton Hawes autobiography *Raise Up Off Me*
- 1974 *The Pyramids* LP on Pyramid Records
- 1974 Fela releases *Alagbon Close*
- 1/18, 21/74 Carlos Garnett records *Black Love* LP for Muse
- 2/74 *Rebirth Cycle* recorded by Mtume
- 3/74 National Black Political Convention, Little Rock AK (1700 attend)

- 4/4/74 C Thornton rees *Gardens of Harlem* w/orch for JCOA, released 12/75
- 4/30/74 1<sup>st</sup> major raid on Fela's Kalakuta Republic (*Expensive Shit* episode)
- Spring 74 *Kwanza* released by Shepp
- 5/24/74 Death of Duke Ellington
- 5/25/74 Ensemble Al-Salaam records *The Sojourner*
- Summer 74 Ali's Alley opens
- Summer 74 Gil Scott-Heron's *The First Minute of a New Day* LP recorded
- 6/74 Sixth Pan-African Congress, Tanzania
- 6/74 *Rise Vision Comin* recorded at The East (LP may be diff session)
- 7/74 Norman Connors' *Slewfoot* LP (Buddah)
- 8/74 Nixon resigns
- 8/74 Jackie McLean and Michael Carvin record *Antiquity* in Copenhagen
- 8/31/74 McCoy Tyner LP *Atlantis* recorded at Keystone Korner
- 8, 12/74 Recording of Piano Choir's *Handscapes 2* LP
- 9/74 Busing starts in Boston
- 9/20/74 Carlos Garnett records *Journey to Enlightenment* LP (Muse)
- 10/74 Joe Bonner records band tracks of *Angel Eyes* LP, including *Celebration*
- 10/29/74 *When Destiny Calls* recorded by Billy Gault
- 10/30/74 Ali-Foreman in Kinshasa, Zaire
- 11/23/74 Major raid at Kalakuta leaves Fela in hospital 17 days
- 12/11/74 Woody Shaw records *The Moontrane* LP for Muse
- 12/74 LaBelle's *Lady Marmalade*
- 1975**
- 1/75 Minnie Riperton's *Lovin' You*; Phoebe Snow's *Poetry Man*
- 1/17/75 Music Inc and Orchestra records *Impact* LP
- 2/75 Blackbyrds' *Walking In Rhythm*
- 2/75 Nathan Hare severs ties with *The Black Scholar*
- 2/18-19/75 McCoy Tyner records *Trident* LP
- 2/22-23/75 Amherst C "Straight Ahead" w/ Shepp, Rivers: *Rev & Soc Change* theme
- 3/75 The East reopens Sat. night music
- Spr 75 Grover Washington's *Mister Magic* hits
- 4/75 Lonnie Liston Smith's *Expansions* LP charts pop, r&b, & jazz (acc to *db*)
- 1975 Flying Dutchman sold to RCA (confirm)
- 4/12/75 Archie Shepp records *There's a Trumpet in My Soul* for Arista
- 4/27/75 Stanley Cowell records *Regeneration* LP on Strata East (SES-1976/5)
- 4/30/75 Fall of Saigon; the Americans flee, it's really over
- 5/75 Norman Connors' *Saturday Night Special* LP (Buddah)
- 5/75 War's *Why Can't We Be Friends?*
- 6/75 Carlos Garnett records *Let This Melody Ring On* (Muse)
- 6/75 Kool and the Gang's *Summer Madness*
- 7/18/75 Archie Shepp at Montreux, 2 LPs issued (incl *Ujamaa, Crucificado*)
- 8/75 Buster Williams' 1<sup>st</sup> LP *Pinnacle* recorded (Muse)
- 8/4-5/75 Archie Shepp records *A Sea of Faces*
- 9/4/75 School busing in Louisville Ky ignites boycott, days of rioting
- 10/11/75 Wailers-Stevie Wonder show in Kingston

- 1975 Gil Scott-Heron records *From South Africa to S. Carolina* (Arista)
- 1975 Carolyn Rodgers' *how I got ovah: New and Selected Poems* (Doubleday)
- 1975 Fela releases six LPs including *Expensive Shit* and *Everything Scatter*
- 11/75 Woody Shaw records *Love Dance*
- 11/18/75 The Cleavers return to the US
- 12/75 Stax Records is put out of business
- 1976**
- 1/19-21/75 McCoy Tyner records *Fly With The Wind* LP
- 2-3/76 Norman Connors records *You Are My Starship* LP
- 5/76 Aretha Franklin's *Something He Can Feel*; Bob Marley and the Wailers' *Rastaman Vibration* released
- 6/4/76 Oneness of JuJu records *Space Jnngle Lm*
- 6/16/76 Soweto uprisings begin
- 6/76 *For Colored Girls* opens at Papp Theater, NYC
- 6/7/76 Carlos Garnett records *Cosmos Nucleus* LP (Muse)
- 6/29/76 Herbie Hancock's V.S.O.P. album recorded at Newport
- 8-9/76 Pharoah Sanders records *Harvest Time* for India Navigation
- 11/6/76 *Woody Shaw Concert Ensemble at the Berliner Jazztage*
- 12/3/76 Bob Marley assassination attempt
- 1976 Lonnie Liston Smith *Renaissance* LP
- 1976 Betty Carter records *Now It's My Turn*
- 1976 Fela releases eight LPs including *Upside Down* and *Zombie*
- 1976 Chancellor Williams' *Destruction of Black Civilization* (3<sup>rd</sup> World Press)
- 1976 In *Gregg v Georgia*, Supreme Ct approves new death penalty statutes
- 1976 In *Coker v Georgia*, Supreme Ct outlaws death penalty for rape
- 1976 Eugene Redmond publishes *DrumVoices*
- 1976 Gil Scott-Heron records *It's Your World*
- 1977**
- 1977 Gil Scott Heron and Brian Jackson's *Bridges*
- 1977 FESTAC
- 1977 Fela releases ten LPs including *No Agreement* and *Sorrow Tears & Blood*
- 1977 European publication of Art Taylor's *Notes and Tones* (1982 US)
- 1977 Recording of Pharoah Sanders' *Love Will Find A Way* LP for Arista
- 1/17/77 Gary Gilmore executed, Salt Lake City UT
- Early 77 Culture's *Two Sevens Clash*
- 2/18/77 "Kalakuta Massacre" by 1000 soldiers: burned down, mom fatally hurt
- 4/77 Bob Marley and the Wailers release *Exodus*
- 4/25/77 Archie Shepp and Horace Parlan record *Goin' Home* LP
- 5/77 Carlos Garnett records *The New Love* for Muse
- 7/77 At Montreux, Don Pullen records *Dialogue Between Malcolm and Betty*
- 7/77 Stanley Cowell records *Waiting for the Moment* LP for Galaxy
- 9/12/77 Steven Biko murdered
- 12/5/77 Death of Rahsaan Roland Kirk
- 12/15-17/77 Woody Shaw records *Rosewood* LP (incl *Rahsaan's Rm*)

## 1978

- 1978 3<sup>rd</sup> World Press republishes Diop's *Cultural Unity of Black Africa*  
2/78 Fela marries 27 women in a single ceremony  
4/22/78 Peace Concert in Kingston w/ Marley Manley Seaga moment  
8/5-6/78 Woody Shaw records *Stepping Stones* LP live at Village Vanguard

## 1979

- 1/5-6/79 John Hicks records *After The Morning* LP on West54  
1/13/79 Henry Threadgill records *X-75 Volume 1* (Arista/Novus)  
2/79 *Richard Pryor Live in Concert* film released  
3/13/79 New Jewel Movement overthrows Gairy regime in Grenada  
5/9/79 Eddie Jefferson murdered in Detroit MI  
7/19/79 *Amaudla* African liberation benefit concert in Cambridge; Marley stars  
7/25-27/79 M'Boom Percussion Ensemble records CBS LP *M'Boom*  
7/26/79 Amina Claudine Myers records *Poems for Piano*  
9/79 Bob Marley and the Wailers release *Survival*  
12/6-8/79 Betty Carter records *The Audience With Betty Carter*  
1979 Dizzy Gillespie's autobiography *To Be Or Not To Bop*  
1979 Ahmed Abdullah records *Life's Force*  
1979 Fela releases 3 LPs: *I.T.T.*, *V.I.P.*, and *Unknown Soldier*

## 1980

- 4/18/80 Zimbabwean independence day  
6/13/80 Walter Rodney assassinated in Guyana  
1980 Pharoah Sanders LP *Journey to the One* on Theresa  
6/19, 22/80 Amina Claudine Myers records *African Blues* (LP *Salutes Bessie Smith*)  
9/23/80 Bob Marley's final performance, Pittsburgh PA

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