

**West African Music in the Music of Art Blakey, Yusef Lateef, and Randy
Weston**

by

Jason John Squinobal

Batchelor of Music, Music Education, Berklee College of Music, 2003

Master of Arts, Ethnomusicology, University of Pittsburgh, 2007

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SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

This dissertation was presented

by

Jason John Squinobal

It was defended on

April 14, 2009

and approved by

Dr. Nathan T. Davis, Professor, Music Department

Dr. Akin Euba, Professor, Music Department

Dr. Eric Moe, Professor, Music Department

Dr. Joseph K. Adjaye, Professor, Africana Studies

Dissertation Director: Dr. Nathan T. Davis, Professor, Music Department

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Jason John Squinobal, PhD

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Abstract

This Dissertation is a historical study of the cultural, social and musical influences that have led to the use of West African music in the compositions and performance of Art Blakey, Yusef Lateef, and Randy Weston. Many jazz musicians have utilized West African music in their musical compositions. Blakey, Lateef and Weston were not the first musicians to do so, however they were chosen for this dissertation because their experiences, influences, and music clearly illustrate the importance that West African culture has played in the lives of African American jazz musicians.

Born during the Harlem Renaissance each of these musicians was influenced by the political views and concepts that predominated African American culture at that time. Imperative among those influences were the concept of pan-Africanism, the writings of Marcus Garvey and the music of Duke Ellington. Additionally, Thelonious Monk, Kenny Clarke and Dizzy Gillespie three of the most important contributors to the bebop revolution made great impressions on Blakey, Lateef, and Weston. All three musicians traveled to West Africa, and while each visited Africa for different reasons, all three were greatly influenced by the music they heard and the musicians they interacted with. All of these influences led to significant use of West African music in the works of Blakey, Lateef and Weston.

Blakey, Weston, and Lateef became professional musicians in their own rights during a period of intense civil rights activities in the United States. Civil Rights activism along with the liberation of African Nations inspired compositions and performances by these three musicians that incorporated elements of West African music with jazz. Through these activities Blakey, Weston, and Lateef were able to provide artistic commentary on the strides being made for the civil rights of both Africans and African Americans.

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PART I: METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.0 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

African music has played a vital role in the creation of African American music, not only at its inception, but also in its continued development through modern times. Evidence of this exists in the use of complex rhythms, polyrhythms, borrowed instruments and other materials from West Africa. To support this, (in an article written in 1973 for the journal, *Black Perspectives in Music*,) African scholar J.H. Kwanbena Nketia highlights the important and interdependent relationship between African and African American music. He states “The relationship between African and Afro-American music is dynamic and unbroken at the conceptual level in spite of the differences in materials to which these concepts are applied.”¹

The work presented in this dissertation identifies the continued and intentional application of West African traditional and popular musical and cultural traits in jazz composition, improvisation, and performance. Many jazz musicians have utilized West African musical elements in their music. I have chosen to focus on three individuals who have synthesized significant amounts of West African musical material with jazz: pianist Randy Weston, drummer Art Blakey, and saxophonist Yusef Lateef. Great care was taken in choosing these three musicians, they were chosen for very specific reasons. First, each musician was born around the same time but grew up in a distinctive yet equally important African American urban community. Second, each of these men attained an exceedingly high level of mastery of his instrument, and of jazz improvisation and performance. Third, these three musicians play three

¹ J.H. Kwanbena Nketia, “The Study of African and Afro-American Music” *Black Perspectives in Music* 1:1, (Spring 1973), 9.

very different instruments, yet all are significantly influenced by West African music. The diversity of the instruments played will aid in demonstrating the pervasiveness and diversity of the influence of West African music on jazz. Finally, all three musicians traveled to West Africa at some point in their lives, and this direct contact with West Africa was vital to their incorporation of West African musical elements in their own music.

While all three are well-known jazz musicians and have become famous playing ‘Western’ instruments, each musician has also utilized significant amounts of West African musical traits and techniques in their jazz performance. All three musicians use ostinatos, polyrhythm, West African traditional instruments, and specific musical material from West African traditional sources. Although Blakey, Lateef, and Weston were not the first musicians to utilize West African musical material in jazz, their experiences, influences, and music clearly demonstrate the importance that West African music and culture have played in the ongoing development of jazz. As individuals, Blakey, Weston, and Lateef found strength and hope by interacting with West African musicians and utilizing West African music in jazz performance. Collectively as African Americans Blakey, Lateef, and Weston found a spiritual connection with their cultural heritage by adopting the religion, customs and music of West Africa.

This study is primarily focused on the impact of West African music on the work of pianist Randy Weston, drummer Art Blakey, and saxophonist Yusef Lateef; however, there are other influences that have had an impact on their work. Therefore I also explore the work of other influential musicians as it applies to the use of traditional West African materials in the music of Blakey, Lateef and Weston. In addition to musical influences, the musicians in question were shaped by African American social and cultural circumstances.

Blakey, Lateef, and Weston were each born around the start of the Harlem Renaissance in the United States, although each musician grew up in a different urban center. Blakey was born in Pittsburgh in 1919. Lateef was born in Chattanooga Tennessee in 1920, and his family moved to Detroit when he was four years old. Weston was born in 1926 in Brooklyn, New York. All three of these major urban centers, Pittsburgh, Detroit, and New York underwent a renaissance movement in the 1920s. This Renaissance movement is most often associated with Harlem and known as the Harlem Renaissance; however, exploring the activities and influences of Blakey, Lateef and Weston will allow me to show that this Renaissance movement was not limited to the confines of Harlem, New York, but was a cultural movement that affected many urban centers throughout the United States in much the same way.

Blakey, Lateef, and Weston were acutely aware of their African heritage as children. Blakey knew that his grandfather and great-grandfather on his mother's side were from Guinea, West Africa, and researched that area for a school project. Lateef was also taught to be proud of his African heritage despite the struggles of slavery his forefathers endured. He felt an instant connection between the blues and West African music and spent significant time exploring that connection. Weston's father felt a strong connection to his African heritage and instilled the concept of pan-Africanism and the writings of Marcus Garvey firmly into Randy Weston's consciousness. The musicians of the Harlem Renaissance movement were equally influential on these three musicians. In particular, Duke Ellington and his band members had a great influence on Weston, Blakey and Lateef.

The next major cultural and musical influence to shape these musicians' lives was the bebop revolution. Bebop is a term used for the music played by young musicians of the 1940s. This time in the history of jazz is significant because influential musicians, like Thelonious

Monk, Kenny Clarke and Dizzy Gillespie, were creating a new kind of music born out of the desire to expand their creative individuality as improvisers; and as a reaction to the appropriation of earlier jazz by white musicians and audiences. Monk, Clarke and Gillespie all made significant contributions to the careers of Blakey, Weston and Lateef. In fact, Thelonious Monk, one of the most significant contributors to the bebop revolution, befriended and mentored both Weston and Blakey. In Monk, Weston recognized the spirit of an African master. While Weston absorbed Monk's style, he also developed a keener sense of African aesthetics through his relationship with Monk.

As Blakey, Lateef, and Weston became professional jazz musicians in their own right it is important to recognize that all three traveled to West Africa (at different times) and spent significant time there studying the musical styles and cultural activities of their ancestors. When they returned to America, each utilized the music they had heard in West Africa to infuse their individual styles. During this same time all three musicians interacted with West African and Afro-Caribbean musicians who lived in or traveled to New York.

During the 1950s and 60s Blakey, Lateef, and Weston each created socially conscious music that contributed to the fight for improved Civil Rights among African Americans. The turbulence by intense civil rights activism during the 1950s, encouraged Weston's attempts to merge West African music with jazz and he composed *Uhuru Afrika*.² At the same time Blakey also used elements of West African music in composing his own tribute to West Africa; *The African Beat*.³ Lateef was a central figure in both of these projects. All of the above influences encouraged these musicians to be conscious of their West African heritage. Through their

² Weston, Randy. *Uhuru Afrika*. (Roulette; 1960.)

³ Blakey, Art; and the Jazz Messengers. *The African Beat*. (Blue Note; 1962.)

musical output they were able to connect with that heritage in a way that was significant to each of them. As a result, the music made by Weston, Blakey, and Lateef was a combination of social, cultural, and musical influences from the Harlem Renaissance era, the bebop revolution, and the Civil Rights movement.

I will show how each musician used his social experiences to create music that reflected life during the civil rights movement and how they attempted to connect the Civil Rights movement in the United States with the struggle for independence on the African Continent and throughout the African diaspora. Finally, I will analyze selected musical works created by these musicians that demonstrate the use of West African music merged with jazz. I will focus on the music these musicians created between the years 1955 and 1965, a time of intense civil rights activism in American history that influenced the use of traditional African music in these musicians' work.

The question may be asked, why were these three musicians so interested in West African music? They were already established as prominent jazz musicians before ever recording any African-inspired works, so why did each of them feel the need to infuse traditional African music into jazz? While each has their own reasons, Weston provides the most cogent explanation; "The history of African people did not begin with slavery but goes back thousands of years."⁴ He continues, "We are still an African people and to understand ourselves better and understand the world better, Africa being the first civilization, I've got to study and learn about what happened a thousand years ago."⁵

⁴ Weston, personal interview with Jason Squinobal, 2007

⁵ Russ Musto, "African Rhythms" *All About Jazz*, (February 2004) <http://www.allaboutjazz.com>. (Accessed September 26, 2006)

In many of the earliest scholarly work on the music of African Americans, one of the major tasks of scholars was to identify the origins of the musical traits that synthesized to create African American music. Scholars focused their efforts on determining which traits were retained from West Africa and which traits were acquired from European influences. Oftentimes, the general assumption was that the majority of musical techniques used to create African American music were borrowed from Western European culture. This inaccurate evaluation was based on the assumption that the cultural traits of African slaves were completely destroyed by the shackles of slavery and as a result, African Americans were forced to survive by adapting to their oppressors' cultural traditions. However, it has become clear over time and with a greater understanding of African and African American cultural traits, that African Americans retained much more of their African traditional culture than was initially thought.⁶

The major challenge of determining exactly which musical materials come directly from West African influences and which are from European influences is one that many jazz scholars tackle. As a result of the transatlantic slave trade, West African music has been infused into a vast number of aspects of music making throughout the Americas. However, West African musical material has been retained and utilized to different degrees depending on the environment and situation African slaves were placed into. Melville Herskovits examines the retention of traditional African material in post-slave cultures throughout America and the Caribbean in his work, *The Myth of the Negro Past*. He suggests that in the Caribbean,

⁶ It must be pointed out that African American slaves were taken from many parts of the African continent, not only from West Africa. Likewise, elements of African culture from all over the vast continent are present in African American cultural traditions. I choose to specifically identify West African cultural musical traits in this dissertation out of a desire to be as specific as possible. In no way do I intend to generalize about the vastly different cultural traditions throughout the continent, at the same time I will limit myself to West Africa for the sake clarity.

influences from many different areas of West Africa are mixed together making it difficult to identify the origins of musical traits. However, in the United States it becomes even more difficult to assign the origins of musical traits. Herskovits states, “not only must the inner combinations of West African types of music be taken into account, but a more far-reaching influence of various European styles as well.”⁷

Africa was, and still is, a land of diverse cultures and peoples. The region of Africa known as West Africa, from which the majority of slaves were taken, boasts hundreds of different languages and ethnic groups.⁸ Yet, however diverse each ethnic group seems to be, it is evident that they have some shared attributes. At the time of the slave trade, as it is today, West Africa was rich in cultural arts including sculpture, mask making, drama, dance and music. “In West Africa the soul of music evolved from an inseparable combination of the sister arts of music, with drama and dance, and became interwoven into the language and customs of the people.”⁹ In many cultures there is one word that names all of these arts, identifying them as a collective group. They are not named or identified individually. This is because “West African instruments, costumes, accessories, and dramatic reactions were dictated by the correlation of the composite arts, music, drama, and dance, and one would be meaningless with out the others.”¹⁰ Music always accompanied dancing at festivals, or ceremonial rituals. The concept of music performed by itself, with the intention of sitting down and listening did not exist. However, when West Africans were taken as slaves in the trans-Atlantic slave trade the practice of a

⁷ Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, (Boston; Beacon Press 1958.) 268

⁸ Countries of West Africa include Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

⁹ Hildred Roach, *Black American Music: Past and Present*, 2nd ed. (Malabar FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 1992.) 7

¹⁰ Roach, *Black American Music*, 7

combined artistic display was no longer possible. African slaves in the new world were forced to develop a new kind of artistic practice that generally focused on music making. In the majority of slave communities in the new world this new development of music making encouraged the diverse styles of music found throughout West Africa to merge, often with elements of Western European music to form various new hybrid musical styles. This merging was encouraged because West African slaves were separated from their families and placed with people from other ethnic groups, finding a way to make music together meant they had to merge styles that had been separate back in West Africa.¹¹

Much of the initial research on African American music focused on early African American folk music. As research began to focus on popular forms of African American music (like jazz,) the line that distinguished African traits from European traits became much harder to draw. “In some instances the general patterns [of African and European traits] approach each other, which complicates the problem where certain similarities of this nature in the two traditions have coalesced and reinforced one another in the New World’s” music.¹² This can easily be seen in jazz, where one must struggle at times to decide whether a musical trait is of West African descent or of Western European descent, or perhaps both.

The complete synthesis of African and European musical traits in jazz can, at times make it difficult to distinguish West African traits from European traits in the origins of jazz. In Part I this dissertation, I will present a review of sources that have addressed the role of West African music in the creation of jazz. However, for my own research I will not focus on general factors that have aided in the origins of jazz, but rather the role that West African music has played as a

¹¹ Roach, *Black American Music*, 8; Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*: 23

¹² Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, 267

source of ongoing inspiration and material for the continual development of jazz. The main challenge inherent in this study is to identify which West African musical elements are employed intentionally in jazz and distinguish those traits from the ones responsible for the inception of jazz. In doing so, I will show that the implementation of West African musical elements in jazz is often an attempt of the jazz artist to identify himself with Africa beyond the capabilities that jazz is able to provide. Therefore, the problem becomes not whether the musical trait is of European or African origin, but whether the musical material or technique is drawn from the traditions of jazz, or re-introduced from the traditions of West Africa.

2.0 CHAPTER 2: TERMINOLOGY, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, AND METHODOLOGY

As with ethnomusicological scholarship of any particular people or genre of music, there are certain theoretical concepts that must be recognized. In regards to the scholarship of African American music, concepts such as acculturation, syncretism, and creolization have been used to identify African American cultural adaptations in the new world. While ethnomusicologists have borrowed these terms from other disciplines, they have been used to a great degree since the work of Herskovists, and have become commonplace in African American ethnomusicological scholarship.

This study cannot be conducted without giving consideration to the concepts of acculturation, syncretism, and creolization, as they pertain to the adaptation of West African music in the Americas. The majority of scholarship focused on acculturation, creolization, and syncretism within the African diaspora comes from Afro-Latin American and Afro-Caribbean anthropological and ethnomusicological studies. However, the concepts put forth by these works are pertinent to my dissertation for a few reasons. First, the slave environment in North America was similar enough to that of Caribbean that the same adaptations or choices had to be made by North American slaves concerning their lives in the New World, as were made by Latin American and Caribbean slaves. Because African slaves in North America and the Caribbean

faced similar challenges of adjusting to a harsh life in the new world, the cultural practices of both groups went through a similar creolization process.

Second, throughout their music activities Weston, Blakey, and Lateef all utilized or interacted with musicians from throughout the African diaspora and not just specifically from the African continent to create their music. Afro-Caribbean musicians were more numerous in North America than West African musicians during the 1950s and 1960s; as a result, Afro-Caribbean musicians were able to fill the role of West African percussionists in the ensembles of Weston and Blakey. Furthermore, Weston, Blakey, and Lateef's perception of the concept of pan-Africanism promoted the use of Caribbean musicians and the interaction of musicians from the African continent and throughout the diaspora.

In order to understand why these concepts have been used in African American scholarship we must take a brief step back and investigate the situation New World slaves were forced into. In the New World, many obstacles stood in the way of African American cultural development and preservation. African slaves came from a culturally rich continent where music, visual arts, and oral history were strong. In America, European slave owners attempted to take these cultural activities away from them. African American slaves had few artistic tools and very little time to produce works of art. Their orally transmitted myths and historical past were nearly obliterated by the social separation that tore husbands from their wives and men from their kinsmen. Yet New World slaves still had their voices. Consequently, much of their creative energy became devoted to music. Music survived because it needed no tools; songs could be sung while working in the fields, and in fact it made work easier. "In Africa, music

helped to preserve the history of the people; in America, African Americans retained that function within their music along with many other traditional African patterns.”¹³

Music became one of outlet slaves had for retaining cultural traits that had once relied on all of the arts for sustenance.¹⁴ For this reason, music making became one of the most important aspects of slave life. Lawrence-McIntyre states, “Because of its primary importance in every phase of African life from birth to death, slaves continued to view music and life joined together.”¹⁵ The learning of songs, song text, and instruments were not only a creative outlet for the oppressed slaves, songs were also their only means of preserving past elements of history and culture. Through spirituals they developed a code language that allowed them to communicate vital information to one another; they educated their children, and passed down an oral tradition that recorded their struggles with slavery.

2.1 TERMINOLOGY

African American and post-colonial scholars needed terminology to discuss and describe the interactions and activities that burgeoned due to American slavery and colonial rule in Africa, this terminology is known as post-colonial theory. Post-colonialism is a set of theories in philosophy, film, art, music and literature that deal with the cultural legacy of colonial rule. While many definitions of post-colonial theory discuss its role in shaping literature, the same

¹³ Charshee Charlotte Lawrence-McIntyre, “The Double Meanings of the Spirituals” *Journal of Black Studies* (17.4 (June 1987), 379-401) 381

¹⁴ Other ways slave were able to preserve their history and culture include rituals, religious practices, language, and oral literature. (Joseph Adjaye, personal communication, March 18, 2009)

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 381-382

holds true for its affect on music and other forms of artistic expressions. The terms acculturation, syncretism, and creolization came into use in African American scholarship as a direct result of harsh environment slaves were placed in during the period of European colonialism.

Ethnomusicologists have found the music produced by the confluence of African slaves and European slave owners throughout the Americas a rich source for investigation. The ethnomusicological studies of these so-called ‘hybrid’ musical styles produced by African Americans range from Caribbean folk and popular music traditions like rumba and zouk to North American spirituals and Jazz. Yet, in many early examples of this scholarship these synthesized musical styles were seen as less than equal when compared to their ‘pure’ parent styles. In her article, “The Processes and Results of Musical Culture Contact,” Margaret J. Kartomi states, “Although the exact reasons for the disapproval of musics of mixed Western and non-Western descent are not normally explained, the vocabulary used by writers to describe them has generally implied that they lacked authenticity or were degenerate and over-sentimental, having been influenced only by the ‘lowest’ forms of Western music.”¹⁶ In reaction to this misuse of terminology, she argues for the reassessment of the reception of hybrid musical styles stating, “Blanket judgments made against [hybrid] musical genres are frequently based on Western aesthetic standards, which cannot appropriately be applied to a non-Western music.”¹⁷ To remedy the inaccurate judgments made against these styles of music, Kartomi calls for a closer look at the terminology used in modern ethnomusicological scholarship.

¹⁶ Margaret J. Kartomi, “The Processes and Results of Musical Culture Contact: A Discussion of Terminology and Concepts.” (*Ethnomusicology* Vol. 25, No. 2. (May 1981) pp. 227)

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 228

In ethnomusicological scholarship the terminology drawn from post-colonialism has often been borrowed from other disciplines. Due to a lack of “appropriate musicological terminology, writers borrow [derogatory] expressions from such disciplines as biology, botany, chemistry, the culinary arts, physics, anthropology, linguistics, and mythology, and applied them by analogy to musical effects which they resembled in one way or another”¹⁸ writes Kartomi. As a result, some of the terminology used by ethnomusicologists takes on an unnecessarily derogatory tone. For example, terms such as cross-fertilized, hybrid, creole, mestizo, and mulatto “have sometimes been confused in their meanings with negative attitudes to illicit breeding and interracial liaisons.”¹⁹ In an attempt to clearly differentiate some of the most common terms associated with African American ethnomusicological scholarship it is necessary to take a brief look at how they have been defined.

In African American ethnomusicological scholarship, acculturation is most typically used to denote a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact. For example, in an article addressing the similarities between West African music and Western European music that aided in the development of African American music Alan Merriam states:

In respect to Western influences, the probability of acculturation is enhanced by structural factors in the two musical systems themselves. It has been postulated that when the structures in two systems are similar, the potential for blending is much greater than when the structures are dissimilar, and that exchange of ideas thus will be frequent in the first instance, infrequent in the second.²⁰

¹⁸ Kartomi, “The Processes and Results of Musical Culture Contact,” 228

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 229

²⁰ Alan P. Merriam, “Music in American Culture,” *American Anthropologist* (Vol. 57, No. 6, (Dec. 1955), pp.1173-1181.) 80

Expanding upon the idea that there are similarities between African music and Western music Merriam lists: both systems have an essential bias of diatonic scale and harmony, the structure of the melodic lines are similar, polyphony is strong in both systems.²¹ Many scholars argue that the compatibility of West African and Western European musics is one of the reasons the musics have merged so well. Peter Manuel states:

Scholars have commented on the considerable degree of compatibility between African and European musics...Two- and three-part vocal harmony occurs in African as well as in European traditional music, while Protestant hymns used call-and-response ‘lining out’ compatible with African practices. The French and Spanish, like many African communities, had traditional seasonal carnivals with festive music. Further, most European folk musics, like African music, were orally transmitted traditions rather than written ones.²²

However, scholars have also questioned the validity of the implications of the term acculturation. Acculturation is often identified as the forced cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture, usually a dominant one. Kartomi, states that acculturation has been used with “ethnocentric or racist-supremacist overtones.”²³ It carries with it a denotation of dominant/subdominant relationship in which the subdominant society is forced to incorporate elements of the dominating culture in order to conform to a ruling class. Acculturation “came to be used when intercultural contacts mostly involved colonial people being subordinated and required to adjust to the cultures of the Western colonial powers”²⁴

²¹ Merriam, “Music in American Culture,” 80 (It should be noted that Merriam is referring to Western European folk music not Western classical music when he talks of similarities.)

²² Peter Manuel with Kenneth Bilby and Michael Largey. *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music From Rumba to Reggae*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006.)13

²³ Kartomi, “The Processes and Results of Musical Culture Contact,” 232

²⁴ *Ibid*, 232

Another term frequently found in African American ethnomusicological scholarship is syncretism. Most often associated with the merging of religions, syncretism may be understood as the amalgamation, or attempted amalgamation, of diverse styles. Syncretism and acculturation are often used in tandem, often with syncretism being an action within the process of acculturation. An example of this is found in Herskovits's *Myth of the Negro Past*.²⁵ In referencing Herskovits, Merriam writes:

The greatest amount of theoretical attention has been focused upon one aspect of the process of music change in the acculturative situation; this is syncretism, which is defined as one aspect of reinterpretation. Reinterpretation refers to "the process by which old meanings are ascribed to new elements or by which new values change the cultural significance of old forms," and syncretism is specifically that process through which elements of two or more cultures are blended together; this involves both changes of value and form.²⁶

The term syncretism is often incorporated into African American scholarship as it relates to acculturation. In these situations, it also inherits the same dominant/subdominant relationship associated with acculturation.

Creolization is a concept that can be traced back to the work of Herskovits who was the first to identify elements of African culture retained within African American culture.²⁷ Yelvington points out that "today scholars tend to be identified (even if they do not explicitly self-identify) with one of two competing camps: the neo-Herskovitsians versus 'creationist' or 'creolization' theorists. These latter emphasize cultural creativity, cultural blending and

²⁵ Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*,

²⁶ Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music*, (United States, Northwestern University Press, 1964,) 314; Quoting Herskovits *Myth of the Negro Past* 1948, 553

²⁷ Kevin A. Yelvington, *The Anthropology of Afro-Latin America and the Caribbean: Diasporic Dimensions*, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 30, (2001), pp. 227-260

borrowing, cultural adaptations to local circumstances, and ethnogenetic processes.”²⁸ While acculturation and syncretism are often associated with hegemonic dominance dictating what is adopted by the subdominant culture, creolization brings with it a connotation of agency and more equal merging of two distinct cultures by choice more than by force. Thus the term creolization is preferred to acculturation in discussions of cultural transformation in the African diaspora.²⁹

Manuel, characterizes creolization as “the development of a distinctive new culture out of the prolonged encounter of two or more other cultures, the process is also described as ‘syncretism’ although ‘creolization’ is particularly appropriate in the Americas.”³⁰ The reason creolization is an appropriate term to describe this process in the Americas is that the concept of creolization is often found in linguistic studies to identify the creation of pidgin languages. Manuel states, “In linguistic terms, a pidgin language is one evolved through the blending of two or more prior languages, especially of peoples who meet on territory that is the original homeland of neither.”³¹ It is important to realize the emphasis placed on the neutral site for the creolization process. The fact that the New World was not the original homeland of either African slaves or their European masters meant that the creolization process would be most effective. Turning directly to the concept of creolization of music, Manuel states, creolization “tends to involve a certain self-consciousness...Creole cultures...are in some way quintessentially modern, with their self-conscious hybridity and their often dramatic sense of rupture with the inherited, unquestioned traditions from the past.”³²

²⁸ Yelvington, *The Anthropology of Afro-Latin America and the Caribbean*, 7

²⁹ Adjaye, personal communication, March 18, 2009

³⁰ Manuel, *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music From Rumba to Reggae*, 15

³¹ *Ibid*, 15

³² *Ibid*, 15

The degree of retention of specific traits in African American communities is determined in part by the diversity of the ethnic origins of slaves brought to European colonies during the slave period. For example when the Yoruba kingdom collapsed in the early 1800s rival ethnic groups sold off the Yoruba people in great numbers to European slave traders. At the time the British ceased to trade slaves; therefore, the majority of Yoruba slaves went to Iberian-ruled colonies. The concentration of one ethnic group, such as the Yoruba, in Spanish and Portuguese colonies like Cuba and Brazil allowed for a higher degree of concentration of Yoruba musical elements.³³

Finally, Manuel identifies “various stages and subsidiary developments in the creolization process. One can speak of an initial stage which new forms of both neo-African and European-derived musics began to develop in the Caribbean. Cuban rumba can be regarded as such a genre...whereas Santeria music is to some extent a transplanted and recombined Yoruba entity, the rumba is not a transplant because it is a distinctly Cuban creation.”³⁴ In the same sense North American jazz, like Cuban rumba, must be perceived as a completely creolized music derived from West African and Western European music. Therefore it is important to keep in mind the continual process of creolization as it applies to the music of Weston, Blakey, and Lateef.

³³ Manuel, *Caribbean Currents*, 10

³⁴ *Ibid*, 15

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Questions may be asked, why conduct ethnomusicological research on three individuals? How can an in-depth study of the lives of Blakey, Weston, and Lateef help us to better understand the jazz community and African American history? The answer to these questions can be found in the theoretical framework in which I have based my research. For the most part, past ethnomusicological research has focused on ethnographies of whole societies, in an attempt to understand the music making of unfamiliar cultures. However, in recent years there has been a change in ethnomusicological scholarship so that the focus that was once put on large groups of people is now being shifted to the actions of individuals. Through the activities of individuals ethnomusicologists attempt to understand the intentions behind the actions of the larger group. One of the strongest proponents of ethnographic work that focuses on the individual is Timothy Rice.

In his article “Time, Place, and Metaphor,” Timothy Rice presents a new model for musical ethnography, providing a framework that incorporates intercultural theories into ethnomusicological scholarship. Rice applauds earlier models of ethnomusicological study, in particular Alan Merriam’s influential work, *The Anthropology of Music*. However, he critiques Merriam’s work claiming that it neglects to take into consideration intercultural interaction between cultural groups. Rice suggests that, “If traditional methods were blind to these interconnections, [Rice] proposes a new focus on routes rather than roots, on travel rather than dwelling.”³⁵ Rice sees the world, “as a complex of unbounded, interacting cultures and as consisting crucially of the rapid movement of people, ideas, images, and music over vast

³⁵ Timothy Rice, “Time, Place, and Metaphor in Musical Experience and Ethnography,” (*Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 47, No. 2, (Spring/Summer, 2003) pp. 151-177,) 153

distances.”³⁶ He proposes that ethnomusicologists turn their attention away from large, separated cultural groups or areas and refocus on small groups or individuals. This redirected focus on the individual allows scholars to account for the complicated multi-cultural interaction that often occurs among individuals and aids in shaping their lives. “Aspects of musical experience may be shared by socio-cultural or ethnic groups.”³⁷ However, when ethnomusicological studies refocus on the individual, “important differences will be observed that can be understood through a fine-grained analysis of the shifting temporal, social, and cultural basis of that experience.”³⁸

Rice criticizes the lack of consideration for place and time in many ethnomusicological works. He states that there is a need for “Coherence to the complex and seemingly fragmented world that many social theorists...and ethnomusicologists are writing about. That coherence would be situated in subjects’ biographies and in the interaction of people occupying slightly different subject positions but interacting in time and place.”³⁹ Together, the consideration of space and time comprise two thirds of Rice’s own model in which he states that every individual will have different musical experiences, in particular intercultural experiences, depending on the space in which that individual occupies at any particular time. Subsequently, the third portion of Rice’s three-dimensional model is an emphasis on musical metaphor; which, like space and time, directly shapes the individual’s reception of musical material.⁴⁰

I agree with Rice’s model and find it useful in understanding the influences and intercultural interaction that Blakey, Lateef, and Weston have all experienced. Consequently, I place significant emphasis on the experiences of each individual in the theoretical framework of

³⁶ Rice “Time, Place, and Metaphor in Musical Experience and Ethnography,” 151

³⁷ *Ibid*, 153

³⁸ *Ibid*, 153

³⁹ *Ibid*, 157

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 156

my dissertation. With Rice's model I will examine the specific experiences of each musician in three ways. First, I will examine their experiences through time and identify influences that aided in their development and encouraged their interest in West African music, as they grew older. Second, and concomitantly I will identify the significance of the places that each musicians lived and visited, and I will demonstrate how these places helped to encourage the use of West African music. Finally I will identify specific musical elements that came to represent West African music and culture to each musician. As a result I will provide a very specific study of the lives, influences and music of three individuals as an attempt to better understand the life experiences, desires and actions of the African American music community in general.

It is also imperative to acknowledge the significance of the interaction and the specific exchange of musical material that Blakey, Weston, and Lateef had with musicians of the African Diaspora. Using Rice's framework it will be possible to gain a better understanding of African American culture as a whole by investigating the individual activities of Blakey, Weston, and Lateef. By no means am I insinuating that every African American shared Blakey, Weston, and Lateef musical experiences. But a large majority of African Americans did experienced the same racial discrimination, the same desires to connect with a lost heritage and the same struggle for civil rights and equality that Blakey, Weston and Lateef experienced. Understanding how these men were influenced, whom they interacted with and what musical results they were able to produce will provide a further understanding into the challenges, desires and struggles of African Americans as a whole.

One of Ingrid Monson's contributions to African diasporic scholarship is her identification of the occurrence of repetition as a common thread in intercultural musics that borrowed musical material from West Africa. She states, "an image of musical repetitions and

their combination have possibilities for thinking about (1) intercultural dimensions of cultural analysis and (2) the problem of locating individuals and subgroups within a global field of cultural and social forces.”⁴¹ Monson demonstrates the practical application of her concept of repetition in intercultural musical styles, by linking repetitions found in the swing music of Count Basie with music from the Caribbean and Africa. She states:

What interests me about the riffs in [Bassie’s music] are the simultaneous periodicities operating throughout the arrangement and their continuities with Caribbean, and West and Central African musics. Although musics such as jazz, Afro-Cuban, zouk, Haitian vodou drumming, batá drumming, and the traditional musics of the Ewe, Dagomba, and Banda-Linda peoples are extremely divergent in terms of musical surface, the continuities at the level of collective musical process and use of repetition are striking.⁴²

Consequently, Monson identifies that “the similarity in the principals by which repetitions are combined from this perspective provide a material basis for the free flow of particular rhythms and riffs across cultural and national boundaries...that is so widely observed in musics of the African diaspora and may, indeed, be crucial to its process of emergence.”⁴³ It may be said that repetition is commonly found in all styles of music throughout the world, and therefore the identification of repetition in the music of the African Diaspora is insignificant. However, it is the implementation of repetition to create a circular formal structure and at the same time to create polyrhythmic tension within that circular form that is a significant identifying factor in music of the African diaspora. Monson’s identification of repetition as a

⁴¹ This concept of Monson’s builds upon Bourdieu’s idea of habitus, which is itself indebted to a musical metaphor. Bourdieu developed the idea of habitus to describe the interaction between structures, embodied dispositions, and actions in the production and reproduction of culture. Ingrid Monson, “Riffs, Repetition, and Theories of Globalization” *Ethnomusicology* 43:1. (Winter 1999).

⁴² Monson, “Riffs, Repetition, and Theories of Globalization,” 36

⁴³ *Ibid*, 44

binding factor for all music of the African diaspora is important to my dissertation research because it provides a starting point for identifying additional musical traits that facilitate musical exchange between diasporic music. These musical traits will help to identify traditional African musical traits in jazz through my own analysis of the music of Blakey, Lateef, and Weston.

2.3 METHODOLOGY

The objectives of my research and this subsequent dissertation are to identify the use of West African music in the music of Weston, Lateef, and Blakey and to investigate the influences from the Harlem Renaissance up to the Civil Rights Movement that encouraged these musicians to use West African music. The goals of this dissertation are:

1. To determine how the concepts of Pan-Africanism and the music of the Harlem Renaissance influenced Blakey, Weston, and Lateef to incorporate West African music into their jazz performance.
2. To determine how the music and musicians of the bebop movement helped to influence the lives and music of Blakey, Weston, and Lateef.
3. To investigate the effects of the Civil Rights Movement on the musical activities of Weston, Blakey and Lateef.
4. To understand the importance of the interaction between African American, Afro-Caribbean, and West African musicians making music during the 1950s and 1960s.
5. To analyze how Blakey, Weston, and Lateef were able to integrate West African music with jazz.

In order to gather necessary information, this dissertation makes use of interview information, printed sources including biographies, previously printed interviews, and recorded sources that specifically showcase the merging of traditional African music with jazz as well as recordings of traditional African music. Interviews conducted with two of the three primary subjects, Weston and Lateef (Blakey has regrettably passed away) along with interviews of fellow musicians who were colleagues and sidemen of these musicians constitute the primary sources of my research. These primary sources are vital because they provide a first hand account of the social and musical activities that directly influenced the musicians' use of West African music in jazz.

The available sources of printed materials augment the interviews by providing information I was unable to acquire through the interviews. There is a large body of sources that provide important information about jazz and African American culture. These sources play a vital part in understanding the complex puzzle of cultural, social, and musical influences that encouraged Blakey, Weston, and Lateef to employ West African musical material in their music; I have included the most important of these in my literature review.

I have focused on the musical output of these musicians recorded between 1955 and 1965 in order to identify compositional and performance techniques that specifically highlight the synthesis of West African music with jazz. However, this dissertation is not an overview of all recorded output by these musicians during that time. Numerous discographies exist for all three of these musicians.

At the present time there is a paucity of available sources pertaining to the use of West African music in jazz and the influence of West African musical concepts and aesthetic. One of

the most significant, Weinstein's work, *A Night In Tunisia*,⁴⁴ is limited to broad descriptions of the activities and general music making of jazz musicians. Most recently Monson has also provided an important work dealing with the political activities of African American jazz musicians from the 1940s to the 1960s.⁴⁵ In her work Monson briefly touches on the actions of Weston and Blakey, and she makes connections between the Civil Rights movement and the struggle for independence in throughout Africa. Concerning the music of Weston and Blakey, Monson focuses more on the influence of Afro-Cuban music than she does West African music.

Understanding West African musical material in jazz is essential to understanding the important role Africa has played in the formation of American culture in general. The present dissertation provide further evidence why is it important to recognize and identify the continued use of West African musical traits in African American music. Traditional African cultural traits have played a primary role in the ongoing efforts of African Americans to rediscover a culture that was all but taken away during the time of slavery. Recognizing their African roots has also provided African Americans with an avenue by which to travel in their pursuit of equality in a society that has relegated them to second-class citizenship. The importance of recognizing and celebrating African history in the context of African American, and ultimately all, American social structure cannot be underestimated. Without acknowledging and appreciating African history and culture as integral to the shaping of America, African Americans will continue to dwell as second-class citizens; an afterthought in the Anglo-dominated development of America. Despite efforts on many fronts to alleviate the problem of inequality, it will exist until African culture is given its due in the shaping of America.

⁴⁴ Norman C. Weinstein, *A Night in Tunisia*, (Metuchen NJ; London: The Scarecrow Press, 1992)

⁴⁵ Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007)

It is to this end that the present project is focused. Music is an important aspect of both West African and American culture. Recognizing the continuing role West African musical traits have played in the shaping of music in America brings us a step closer to acknowledging the important role that African cultural traits as a whole have played in the shaping of American culture. The importance of understanding African history and heritage as it relates to American history and heritage is a vital step towards improving the lives of African Americans.

All too often, West African music is briefly mentioned as one half of the contributing factors to the origins of jazz. Unfortunately, its contributions have been misunderstood due to a lack of understanding of traditional African music. Furthermore, the continued influence traditional African music has had on jazz has been significantly neglected. One of the main goals of this dissertation is to contribute to the understanding of the role West African aesthetics and musical traits have continued to play in the development of jazz.

3.0 CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is intended to give the reader a view of the background information that I have based my research upon. As a result I have included sources pertaining to both the music of West Africa and Jazz. In addition I have also attempted to identify sources that deal with the influence of West African music on jazz at its inception and those that address the continued influence West African music has had on jazz.

3.1 WEST AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MUSIC

This dissertation is primarily concerned with the use of traditional West African musical traits by jazz musicians. However, it is equally necessary to examine some of the most influential West African music scholarship on its own terms. One of the earliest scholars of African traditional music, Erich Von Hornbostel's work is significant to my own studies because he was the first to recognize the important two against three hemiola so vital to music of West Africa. He states, "The combination of binary and ternary time is characteristic of African meter in general."⁴⁶ Hornbostel suggests that in many instances African rhythm may be perceived as existing in a

⁴⁶ E.M. Von Hornbostel, "African Negro Music" (*Africa*, Vol. 1 No. 1. (January) 1928.) 52

number of different metrical structures at the same time.⁴⁷ One criticism of Hornbostel's work is that he characterizes the whole of African music by looking at a select few examples. Furthermore, it is disappointing that Hornbostel is unable to identify the retention of African musical elements in African American music. For example, he states that African "slaves in America and their descendants, abandoning their original musical style, have adapted themselves to that of their white masters..."⁴⁸

Like Hornbostel, A. M. Jones also identifies the importance of the two against three hemiola. He advances Hornbostel's theory of shifting metric perception by showing how simultaneously dividing a time span into four and three units can produce two different rhythms depending on how the listener focus mentally on the accent of the rhythm.⁴⁹ David Locke praises Jones for being "the first to write of the function of the rhythmic pattern of the bell as the means by which performers stay in time in the music of many West African peoples."⁵⁰ The use of the bell pattern to represent a regular reoccurrence of time in West African music has become customary in transcription and analysis by African music scholars.

A major criticism of Jones arises from his use of staggered bar lines in the transcription of drum ensembles and his statement that, "Whereas in clapping, the various rhythm patterns of the clappers have a simultaneous starting point and so there is always one recurrent beat where they all coincide, in drumming this is not so. In drumming, to state the case in its simplest form, the main beats never coincide."⁵¹ As Locke explains, "Jones believes that each pattern within

⁴⁷ Hornbostel, "African Negro Music", 51

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 60

⁴⁹ Jones A.M. "African Rhythm," (*Africa*, XXIV (January, 1954),) 35-36

⁵⁰ David Locke, "The Music of Atsiagbekor." (Ph.D. dissertation, Wesleyan University, 1978) 304

⁵¹ Jones, "African Rhythm" 39

the ensemble has its own down beat and asserts that the existence of multiple main beats is another crucial dimension of the desired ‘clash of rhythms’.”⁵² Jones’s use of staggered bar lines has been abandoned in modern ethnomusicological scholarship because it is understood that West African musicians do not conceive of their music as being structure in this way. Furthermore, the use of coinciding bar lines makes transcripts much easier to read.

Richard Waterman’s work will be presented fully in the following section on jazz scholarship; but I will mention here three principles of African rhythm that are useful to my own research: 1) African music is conceived in terms of a subjectively felt, steady framework of regularly spaced beats; 2) Polyrhythm and polymeter are commonly used; and 3) song melodies and drum rhythms use off beat phrasing consistently and according to pattern.⁵³ Waterman’s concept of an African metronomic sense has caused controversy among scholars. However Locke defends Waterman based on his own experiences of West African drumming. Locke states, “I firmly believe that Waterman is right: there is one beat. One stream of beats felt in common by everyone helps performers maintain accurate timing.”⁵⁴

J.H. Kwanbena Nketia was one of the first African scholars to provide an alternative view to Jones’s staggered bar lines. In contrast of Jones’s assertion of multiple bar lines and multiple down beats, Nketia states, “the placement of the rhythmic phrase in relation to the main beats is variable. It may start with it, or come before or after it. Off-beat phrasing is of particular interest to the African as a means of heightening the rhythmic tensions of a single line of music.”⁵⁵ This statement explains great flexibility in the accentuation of drum phrases and is in direct contrast to

⁵² Locke, *The Music of Atsiagbekor*, 307

⁵³ See Waterman 1948 and 1952.

⁵⁴ Locke, *The Music of Atsiagbekor*, 308

⁵⁵ J.H. Kwanbena Nketia, *African Music in Ghana*. (Great Britain: Northwestern University Press, 1963) 108

Jones who believed that the strong accent of each drum phrase marked the downbeat of that phrase. While it may seem that the discrepancy of these two views is found merely in the presentation of African music transcriptions, there is an underlying acceptance that the transcription represents aural, and cognitive perception of West African music by West African musician, if this is the case then the distinctions made by Nketia are quite significant.

In one of his first ethnographies, *Drumming in Akan Communities of Ghana*, Nketia focuses on the role that music, drums, and drummers play in Akan society. Nketia restricts this work to the social implications of Akan drumming, reserving in-depth musical analysis of Akan drumming for another volume. Within this work we find useful information about the role each of the drummers plays as a member of an ensemble. Of particular significance to my dissertation research is Nketia's description of the role the master drummer plays within the ensemble.

African Music in Ghana (1963) takes a look at folk and traditional music throughout the country of Ghana. Looking at both vocal music and instrumental music Nketia finds common general traits throughout the musical of the many different ethnic groups that inhabit the country. Among these common musical devices he includes: "ostinato, sequence, repetition and variation, all of which provide a ready means of elaborating or extending a piece indefinitely."⁵⁶ The act of extending a cyclical piece indefinitely is one of the features found in jazz of the 1950s and 1960s and all of these musical devices are employed in jazz as well.

Nketia's well-known work *The Music of Africa* takes an analytical look at the music itself and is an important resource for information on African traditional music. Nketia's work is particularly drawn upon in the music analysis section of my dissertation. In *The Music of Africa*, Nketia focuses primarily on traditional or folk music in Africa, with very little mention of

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 108

African popular or art music. Nketia provides a thorough examination of African musical traits including the rhythmic and melodic construction of both instrumental and vocal music.

Nketia's examination of specific instruments is extensive, as he explores the role of African instruments by family sets. Of particular interest to this dissertation is Nketia's discussion of aerophones because it directly relates to the musical activities of Lateef. Furthermore, Nketia's section on the melodic construction of instrumental music is also pertinent to the musical activities of both Weston and Lateef.

In an article for *Black Perspectives in Music*, Nketia highlights the fact that very few scholarship activities focus on the continued relationship between West African and African American musicians.⁵⁷ This article is important to my dissertation because it voices the concern that more attention should be placed on the continual and cyclical nature of influence between West African and African American musicians. This view is in contrast to much of the scholarship on jazz at the publication of the article in 1973, which identified the influence of West African music on jazz at its inception but often neglected to identify the continuing and reciprocating relationship that West African music had with jazz.

After Nketia, David Locke provides some of the most extensive musical analysis of West African music. For example, Locke's dissertation provides an extensive example of musical analysis of traditional Ewe song and drum ensembles. In his analysis section Locke provides

⁵⁷ Nketia, J.H. Kwanbena, "The Study of African and Afro-American Music," (*Black Perspectives in Music*, 1:1, Spring 1973)

useful information on the melodic application of hemitonic and anhemitonic pentatonic scales in Eve songs, including the use of added notes in pentatonic melodies.⁵⁸

Locke asserts that, “Every member of the performing group shares a commonly felt subjective beat; African rhythms are highly syncopated. By all means, patterns start at different moments, and yes, the opposition of rhythms is a desired affect, but these rhythmic events occur within an unchanging rhythmic framework which exists for all players.”⁵⁹ He continues, “Since several streams of beats of different duration often occur simultaneously it is necessary to point out that one beat series is paramount, while other beat series occur in cross rhythm relationships to it.”⁶⁰ In this statement Locke is referring to the cross rhythm between the main four beat and the secondary six beat pattern in the majority of Eve drum music, which he notates in 12/8. He goes on to state that he considers the main beat division of 12/8 meter to be divided into duple meter, two or four beats. However, Locke continues:

“In music with a ternary division of the main beat the Eve feel a constant 3:2 cross rhythm so that a latent triple or sextuple meter is always felt. Furthermore, supporting, responding, or leading drums often sound rhythms that accent this subsidiary triple meter. But it is essential to realize that such rhythms are conceived in relation to the fundamental meter, and that their powerful musical effect derives from this interaction.”⁶¹

Locke’s *Drum Gahu* is different than other monographs on a particular kind of West African music as it focuses solely on the musical sound. Unlike other ethnomusicological studies, in this work Locke is not concerned with the music’s role within the society but in providing a practical instructional manual for analyzing and performing *Gahu*. He states, that

⁵⁸ Hemitonic pentatonic scales are those that include the interval of a half-step between at least adjacent pitches, while anhemitonic pentatonic scales contain no half-step intervals.

⁵⁹ Locke, *The Music of Atsiagbekor*, 307-308

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 320

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 322

the book is “designed to function like a score, guiding the instrumentalist towards adequate performance.”⁶²

Locke’s work on *Gahu* is valuable to my dissertation because it provides a model for drum notation and analysis of Ewe drum ensemble music. In his transcriptions Locke focuses on clearly displaying timing, relative pitch and timbre of sounded tones, ornamentation dynamics, articulation, and polyrhythmic coordination among parts. He uses a modified version of staff notation with bar lines placed according to the duration of the bell pattern. Rests are used to clarify the position of notes in relation to beats rather than to represent actively created silences.

John Miller Chernoff’s work, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, is often applauded for attempting to understand African music from an African point of view. As the author states, “Starting with a detailed description of some general characteristics of African music, we will reach an aesthetic appreciation that will refer us to a style of living and a sensibility toward life revealing cultural patterns, ethical modes, and standards of judgment.”⁶³ In this case he uses sensibility to mean modes and standards of judgment in terms of aesthetic values of music. Chernoff, of course is limiting his scope to Dagomba and Ewe people in Ghana and should indicate that he is identifying Dagomba and Ewe sensibilities.

From the opening chapter Chernoff voices his concern for the dilemma of representing unfamiliar concepts of music in term that western readers will understand while at the same time recognizing its individuality. “How can we bring something of a different order into our world of understanding and at the same time recognize and appreciate it on its own terms?”⁶⁴ In one

⁶² David Locke, *Drum Gahu*, (Crown Point, IN: White Cliffs Media Company, 1987) 4

⁶³ John Miller Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms*, (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1979) 4

⁶⁴ Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, 3

sense Chernoff is not only trying to *explain* West African music, by reporting to his readers what it is, he is trying to convey an *understanding* of how and why West African music is the way it is. For example Chernoff states, “As a cultural expression, music is a product of this sensibility, but more significantly, as a social force, music helps shape this sensibility.”⁶⁵ He links the polyrhythmic interaction of the music to the polyrhythmic interaction of social forces within the community, as one influences the other.

Chernoff’s work dates itself by describing African music on its own terms, and by neglecting to identify correlating aspects that might be found in Western music. Chernoff receives considerable criticism from Kofi Agawu on a number of issues; these issues are discussed in the section pertaining to Agawu’s work below. The crux of the matter is that Chernoff overemphasizes the differences between West African music and music of the West and this overemphasis impedes discourse that attempts to bridge the two cultures.

Akin Euba’s work on Yoruba Drumming provides an extensive ethnography of the dùndún tradition, the most popular style of traditional tension drum performance in Yoruba culture of Nigeria. In his work Euba provides substantial information about the social background of the Yoruba drummers including historical considerations and typical development and social activities of dùndún musicians. Euba’s extensive section on the transcription and analysis of dùndún music is of particular interest to this dissertation.

One of Euba’s most valued contributions to the literature of West African Music, (as it pertains to my own scholarship), is his analysis technique of the dùndún drum ensemble in which he identifies pitch relationships between the different size drums. Using these pitch relationships Euba posits tonality within the ensemble and gives harmonic consideration to dùndún musical

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 154

works. Finally, Euba provides insight into both the compositional and improvisational processes of dundún music, addressing both improvisation of the lead solo part and collective creativity. Both of these processes are directly relevant to my own work because it provides an example of a creative musical process analogous to that found in African American jazz.

In the article, “Jazz as a Model for African Composition” for the *International Jazz Archives Journal*,⁶⁶ Euba investigates the nature of implementing African musical elements employed in compositions by Western composers. In this article, Euba presents a continuum of the degree of African musical elements found within a composition beginning with none and ending with only African material and no external non-African material.

1. Music based entirely on Western models and in which the composer has not consciously introduced any African elements.
2. Music in which thematic material is borrowed from African sources but which is otherwise Western in idiom and instrumentation.
3. Music in which African elements form an integral part of the idiom, through the use of African instruments or texts or stylistic concepts and so forth.
4. Music, whose idiom is derived from African traditional culture, employs African instruments and in which the composer has not consciously introduced non-African ideas.⁶⁷

It will be evident through musical analysis that Weston, Blakey and Lateef utilize compositional techniques from numbers two and three on Euba’s continuum.

Hausa Performing Arts and Music is a two-part ethnographic work. Part I, written by Ziky O. Kofoworola, explores Hausa performing arts and focuses primarily on the dramatic

⁶⁶ Akin Euba, “Jazz as a Model for African Composition” *International Jazz Archives*, Vol. III No. 1, Fall 2006-2007.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*

aspects of the arts. Part II, written by Yusef Lateef, focuses on the musicians, music, and musical instruments of Northwestern Nigeria. Lateef's ethnography of Hausa music and musicians includes interviews with local musicians and photos of various instruments detailing playing technique and instrument ranges. Lateef pays close attention to Hausa aerophones and the *sarewa*, a Hausa end-blown flute, in particular. In his section on the *sarewa*, Lateef includes a number of transcriptions of the solo flute music. Interestingly, these transcriptions contain no meter or time signature; therefore, discerning a metric feeling or even accents are difficult at times from the notation without the audio examples. Along with the transcriptions Lateef provides an explanation of basic playing technique for the beginning *sarewa* musician. Included in this explanation is the formation of the embouchure, fingering charts, playing position, tonguing attack, and intonation. Unfortunately, Lateef does not consider phrasing, improvisational or compositional techniques of *sarewa* musicians.

Furthermore, while describing his overall experience of conducting research in Northwestern Nigeria, Lateef seemed particularly disheartened to have encountered the influence of American guitar playing techniques in Nigeria. He states, "The inherent cultural tragedy here is not that they, [Northwestern Nigerian musicians,] have taken to playing the western guitar but that they fail to play their own indigenous harmonies, melodies, rhythms, and aesthetic attitudes on the guitar."⁶⁸ It seems surprising that as a jazz musician, Lateef does not recognize the synthetic nature of guitar music in West Africa, and the fact that this music is very similar to jazz—a hybrid of West African and American music and techniques. He is entitled to his opinion; yet, one is left to wonder if his conception of West African music is limited to that of

⁶⁸ Yusef Lateef and Kofoworola, Ziky, *Hausa Performing Arts and Music*, (Lagos: Dept. of Culture, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, 1987) 194

traditional music. He gives no consideration to the validity of Western musical influences that helped to shape modern West African music as a result of colonialism, in the same way that modern African American music contains Western European influences. When asked about this Lateef only reiterated that he had traveled to Africa hear West African tradition music and he was disappointed that African musicians were not using more of their traditional musical material in the guitar music.⁶⁹

Kofi Agawu's seminal work, *Representing African Music*, is primarily concerned with the influence of colonialism and Western scholarship of music on the African continent. As a result, his work is important to this dissertation because Agawu presents an insightful and concise critique of many early scholars of African music. A.M. Jones's scholarship in particular, receives some biting criticism from Agawu. This is important to my work because many early scholars who were investigating the origins of jazz depended on Jones's work. Agawu's main criticism of Jones's work can be summarized in this paragraph from *Representing African Music*, Agawu states:

A cursory glance at the second volume of *Studies in African Music* confirms the complexity of African rhythmic systems. A sometimes rapid succession of meters, staggered bar lines tracing crooked paths from the top to the bottom of the texture, and unusual groupings of notes together with other features make it difficult to find the conductor's beat that would unlock the secrets of African drum ensemble playing. Jones, in fact, believed in noncoincident main beats. The graphic severity and unwieldiness of his transcriptions would seem to confirm the essential difference, the otherness, perhaps even the exoticism of African music. Yet, since Jones was transcribing a dance repertoire, it should have occurred to him that (even African) dancers need a regular, recurring beat to guide their negotiation of movement. By shunning regularity and isochrony, Jones encourages fantastic views about Africans dancing with their whole bodies, each body part performing a different rhythm in a different meter.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Yusef Lateef, interview with Jason Squinobal 2007.

⁷⁰ Kofi Agawu, *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, and Positions*, (New York; London: Routledge, 2003,) 67

Agawu also exposes the fact that Chernoff's conception of polyrhythm in West African music is inaccurate. For example, Chernoff quotes A. M. Jones that "the cardinal principal of African music is the clash and conflict of rhythms."⁷¹ Agawu argues that the concept of clashing rhythm goes against the "communal cooperative" sensibility in African societies.⁷² Agawu calls for a more accurate representation of African music one that includes not only the significant differences that set it apart from other music but also the significant similarities.⁷³ In accordance with this, Agawu provides a very important model on how not to analyze African music and suggests alternative ways one might go about analyzing African music.

In the recent article "Structural Analysis or Cultural Analysis? Competing Perspectives on the 'Standard Time Pattern' of West African Rhythm" Agawu suggests that the multitude of different time line patterns found in Central and West Africa originally developed from a select few archetypes.⁷⁴ According to Agawu, and Jeff Pressing,⁷⁵ these archetypes may have been subjected to variation and embellishment as they were disseminated across Central and West Africa. Agawu suggests that the most probable technique of variation that has led to the multitude of different time line patterns is element fission and fusion. Agawu states, "The processes of dividing things up or conflating previously separate elements, while maintaining their spans or temporal extents, lie at the heart of African modes of rhythmic expression."⁷⁶ In

⁷¹ Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, 47

⁷² Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 78

⁷³ *Ibid*

⁷⁴ Agawu, Kofi. "Structural Analysis or Cultural Analysis? Competing Perspectives on the 'Standard Time Pattern' of West African Rhythm", *Journal of American Musicological Society*, 59:1. (2006)

⁷⁵ Agawu cites Pressings work repeatedly in this article. Jeff Pressing, "Cognitive Isomorphisms between Pitch and Rhythm in World Musics: West Africa, the Balkans and Western Tonality," *Studies in Music* 17 (1983)

⁷⁶ Agawu, "Structural Analysis or Cultural Analysis?" 38.

the end, Agawu's study is cursory and creates more questions than answers. For example, what are the origins of the archetypes, how were they chosen and created? Also, what was the process of dissemination that allowed the archetypes to be spread throughout West Africa? Finally, is it possible that these archetypes originated in different places simultaneously, and if so why do they all have similar characteristics? However, if Agawu's theory is correct then it shows that in the past there was a great deal of change and development that took place as archetypical standard patterns disseminated through West Africa.

3.2 SIGNIFICANT JAZZ SCHOLARSHIP

It is generally accepted that jazz has developed as a synthesis of traditional West African music and Western European music. Research on the creation of jazz has been a popular topic of African American music scholarship since the 1930s. However, as is often the case in studies of an unfamiliar music, much of the earliest scholarship on the influences that combined to create jazz is diverse and at times contradictory. In many of the earliest scholarly works on the music of African Americans, one of the major tasks of scholars was to identify the origins of the musical traits that synthesized to create African American music. Scholars focused their efforts on determining which traits were retained from Africa and which traits were acquired from Europe.

As was mentioned in "Chapter One," the earliest assumptions made by scholars was that the majority of musical material and techniques used to create African American music were borrowed from Western European culture. This assumption was based on another inaccurate

assumption that the original cultures of West African slaves were completely destroyed by the shackles of slavery, and as a result African Americans were forced to survive by adapting to their oppressors' cultural traditions. However, it is now widely accepted that African Americans have retained much more of their traditional African culture than was initially thought. Herskovits states, "pure African melodies and rhythms may be encountered, but these are exceptions. On the other hand, it is rare to find an [African American] song which, though quite European in melodic line, is not tinged by some African [musical elements]." ⁷⁷ Early scholars like Herskovits and Waterman demonstrated that the majority of all African American music is the product of a synthesis of African and European music.

The earliest scholarship in jazz can be characterized as one of two extremes. At one extreme were scholars who refused to believe that jazz contained any elements of traditional African music. ⁷⁸ The other extreme were scholars who reacted to the previous view by proclaiming that jazz was a direct descendant of African music and contained no elements of European musical influence. Lee B. Brown calls this kind of early scholarship 'primitivism' and states these two extreme views are "two sides of the same coin, both suffer from essentialist thinking that weakens their usefulness in jazz scholarship." ⁷⁹ In his article "Postmodern Jazz Theory," Brown is particularly concerned with the 'primitivist' view that jazz is only derived from African music. He argues against those who would say that jazz developed solely out of African music, or that pure jazz should not contain any European musical traits whatsoever. He states that if it were the case that jazz contained no European musical influences then the music

⁷⁷ Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, 267

⁷⁸ See Krehbiel and Hearn quoted in Robert Goffin, *Jazz: From the Congo to the Metropolitan*, (New York, Da Capo Press, 1944, reprint 1975,) 6.

⁷⁹ Lee B. Brown, "Postmodern Jazz Theory: Afrocentrism, Old and New," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (57:2 Spring 1999,) 236

would be unrecognizable as jazz; it would be West African traditional music.⁸⁰ The majority of acknowledged scholarship today on the origins of early jazz holds a synthesized view. Despite the shared belief that jazz formed out of a merging of African and European musical and cultural elements, the amount and extent of influence by each side differs greatly.

One of the earliest scholarly works on jazz came not from an American musicologist but from Robert Goffin, a Belgian music critic who seemed to recognize the value of jazz as an American art form before Americans themselves recognized its value. It is reported, in the introduction to his work, that Goffin “was the first serious man of letters to take jazz seriously enough to devote a book to it.”⁸¹ Goffin’s first treatment of jazz can be found in *Aux Frontieres du Jazz* in 1930. In 1944, after making an escape from the Nazis, he made his way to America and printed his first work in English, *From the Congo to the Metropolitan*. The early publication of this book provides a valuable critical view of jazz. Goffin calls jazz a revolution in musical art. “It is not a new music; it is a new form of music based on rhythm...”⁸² The early identification of rhythm as a dominant element in jazz is significant and although he does not explicitly state it, it is clear that Goffin identifies early jazz rhythm with rhythm from African music.

One of the most valuable aspects of Goffin’s work is the inclusion of other sources in the form of extended quotes, which also touch on the subject of West African influence on jazz. For example, Goffin presents a September 9, 1909 issue of the New York *Sun*, in which Dr. Krehbiel, a professor at Columbia, reports on the results of fieldwork done in New Orleans. In

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 238

⁸¹ Arnold Gingrich Introduction to: *Jazz: From the Congo to the Metropolitan*, (By Robert Goffin) ix

⁸² *Ibid*, 5

this article Krehbiel “asserts that jazz owes nothing to African music.”⁸³ Krehbiel’s article for the *Sun* is an account of fieldwork in New Orleans on African American music at the turn of the century performed by the scholar Lafcadio Hearn. Krehbiel writes:

Hearn like Gottschalk [before him] realized at last that there was no [African American] music. The strains he heard were barbaric, yet familiar, and it came to him at last as it came to all other enlightened investigators previously that the sterling tunes he heard were more or less adaptations of French and Spanish folk songs. There is in this country, at least, no African or Congo music.⁸⁴

This early article gives readers insight into the view of African American music at the turn of the century and of the prejudiced opinions that were held by some white scholars of the time.

Goffin disagrees with Krehbiel’s remarks by saying, “Jazz, like any artistic phenomenon, represents the sum of an addition. The factors of this addition are, to my mind, African music, French and American music.”⁸⁵ Goffin then proceeds to give examples of West African musical traits that have persisted in African American music and states, “At the base of jazz, then, we find African rhythmic expression forming a counterpoise to the traditional music of the [White] inhabitants of the Mississippi Valley.”⁸⁶ The traditional music of the Mississippi valley in this statement refers to French folksongs brought there by European slave owners. The value of Goffin’s work is that he brought legitimacy to jazz scholarship and opened the door for other scholars.⁸⁷

⁸³ Goffin, *Jazz: From the Congo to the Metropolitan*, 6

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 8

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 9

⁸⁶ Goffin, *Jazz: From the Congo to the Metropolitan*, 14

⁸⁷ It may seem strange to identify European folk music and not European art music as a building block of jazz. However, Goffin is describing the elements that helped to create jazz at its origins. In the very early stages it was European folk music and sacred hymns that African slaves have the widest access to, not Western art music and therefore it was these genres of music that most influenced early jazz. This is also the way jazz was preceded by the blues, a style of music with a

Similarly, Andre Hodeir's work *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence* is a reaction against early scholars who took an extreme stance that jazz was constructed of purely European or African origins. Instead of arguing for the inclusion of influences from each of the particular traditions, Hodeir argues against the view that jazz is dependent on either of the traditions. For example, from the point of view held by 'African purists' he states, "From such an observers point of view, the 'pure' African music...had undoubtedly been diluted by the introduction of white elements that were absolutely foreign to its tradition."⁸⁸ Hodeir spends a considerable amount of time investigating the influences of the creation of jazz. As a result, he concludes that jazz, even in its purest form, is not dependant on one influence more than another. He states, "The fact remains, that there is no point in its history at which jazz can be considered 'pure' music."⁸⁹ Hodeir points out that jazz should not be judged from a European perspective, yet it also must not be judged from an African perspective.

Fela Sowande, a Nigerian composer and scholar, considers the nature of integration that has taken place in jazz in a lecture reprinted in the journal, *Africa*. Sowande states, "In America illegitimate contact between the lower strata of the black and white races produced jazz—a form which is not in the true and natural tradition of African music, but is the fruit of an illicit union

much simpler harmonic structure. The more complex harmonies drawn from Western art music are not utilized until the 1940s when bebop musicians began to listen to and use elements of modern European classical music. There are at least two reasons for the increased interest in modern classical music. First, bebop musicians wanted to infuse their music with more complex harmonic movement as a means of making the relatively static harmony more interesting and to make improvising over bebop harmonic forms more difficult. Young bebop musicians also wanted to move away from the image of an entertainer, therefore they associated themselves with western classical composers as a way to be seen less as entertainers and more as artists.

⁸⁸ Andre Hodeir, *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence*, (David Noakes trans. New York; Grove Press, Inc. 1956,) 44

⁸⁹ Hodeir, *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence*, 46

between the races which took place because a free and natural union was denied.”⁹⁰ It is evident from this statement that Sowande’s view of jazz is similar to that of Hodeir from the standpoint that jazz cannot be viewed as a pure descendent of African music.⁹¹

In 1943 Richard A. Waterman was one of the first American ethnomusicologists to concentrate on the retention of West African traditional music in jazz. In his study “‘Hot’ Rhythm in Negro Music,” Waterman identifies an aspect of West African rhythm called ‘hot rhythm’, and summarizes the history of its dissemination from Africa into various portions of the Americas.⁹² Waterman gives two reasons why West African musical elements have influenced African American music. First, African American communities have “remained relatively homogeneous...this has guaranteed the retention of any values not in conflict with the prevailing Euro-American culture pattern. Second, there is enough similarity between African and European music to permit musical syncretism.”⁹³ Waterman further identifies the similarities between African and European music by stating, “The presence of the same basic concept of

⁹⁰ Fela Sowande, “African Music,” (*Africa* Vol. 14, (1944), pp. 340-342,) 342

⁹¹ Sowande is most often considered a scholar of traditional African music; however, his writings are cited quite liberally in Bill Cole’s biography of John Coltrane. In *John Coltrane*, Cole depends on Sowande’s characterizations of African music to show both a conscious and unconscious link between traditional African musical techniques and aesthetics and the music of John Coltrane. For example, Cole cites Sowande in the introduction of a chapter describing Coltrane’s religious devotion. Cole, citing Sowande writes, “The Way of Life of the Blacks of Africa, as for Peoples of African Descent anywhere, is firmly rooted in the UNITY of GOD-MAN-NATURE, and its study, or the study of any aspect of that Way of Life whatever, must be undertaken within the context of this Unity.” (Cole, Quoting Sowande, capitalization of words is kept as found in Cole. Bill Cole, *John Coltrane*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1976, 85)

⁹² Richard A. Waterman, “‘Hot’ Rhythm in Negro Music,” (*Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol.1 No.1 (1948) pp.24-37,) 24

⁹³ Richard A. Waterman, “African Influence on the Music of the Americas” in *Acculturation in the Americas*. Sol Tax Ed. Chicago 1952,) 207

scale and the use of harmony in both Europe and Africa have made easy and inevitable the many varieties of Euro-African musical syncretism to be observed in the New World.”⁹⁴

According to Waterman, the similarities between West African and Western European music are significant, and these similarities precipitated the integration of the two styles. For example Waterman states, “In general, New World [African Americans] accepted and adopted those musical traits which they found easier to understand—those which were most similar, either essentially or superficially, to patterns in the music with which they were familiar.”⁹⁵ What is significant about this statement is that Waterman suggests that certain European musical traits were easier for African Americans to understand than other traits were. Unfortunately he does not go into detail to identify exactly which traits of European music were too complicated for African Americans to comprehend. I don’t agree with Waterman on this point. African Americans appropriated the musical traits that they found most useful in creating music similar to music they were familiar with. I don’t believe they chose elements that were “easier to understand,” they chose musical traits which they had develop an aesthetic taste for using back in West Africa.

The early date of Waterman’s research and subsequent publication requires readers to question his assessment of polyrhythm in West African music. In a description of a West African drum ensemble he states, “Each drum or group of similar drums has, so to speak, its own time signature.” He describes this concept of performance with different time signatures as “mixed meters, [which] is the outstanding trait of African percussion rhythm.”⁹⁶ There are instances when mixed meters can share the same bar lines for example the time signatures of 4/4

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 209

⁹⁵ Waterman, Richard A. “‘Hot’ Rhythm in Negro Music,” 26

⁹⁶ Waterman, “‘Hot’ Rhythm in Negro Music,” 25

and 12/8 may coexist sharing coinciding bar lines, as might 6/8 with both 2/4 and 3/4. However Waterman gives examples of mixed metered transcriptions that do not depict coinciding bar lines. Therefore the concept of ‘mixed meters’, or multiple time signatures as Waterman presents it is an outdated assessment of the construction of African drum ensemble music that pervades many examples of early African and African American scholarship.

Waterman was also aware that issues concerning African American scholarship needed to be addressed. In a statement that criticizes the academic view of African American music in 1952, Waterman states:

Has been intended to show how the African musical tradition, or at least certain aspects of it, could persist in the New World. There would be no reason for the explanation, since such persistences of tradition are commonplace in acculturative situations, were it not for the fact that a sort of *academic* tradition has been in force, which...has systematically denied both the fact and the possibility of such persistence of African tradition.⁹⁷

With statements like this one, Waterman show a rare understanding (for the time,) of the inequalities and racism found in African American scholarship, and his work aided in alleviating some of resistance against progress being made in the early scholarship of jazz.

Gunther Schuller may be considered one of the most noteworthy musicologists to study the influences that have led to the creation and development of jazz. In his book, *Early Jazz*, Schuller takes his readers through the development of jazz from the music of West Africa up through the music of Duke Ellington and his big band.⁹⁸ One of the most significant elements of Schuller’s work is his attempt to conceptualize exactly what elements of traditional West African music were retained in the development of jazz. In doing this, Schuller is one of the few scholars

⁹⁷ Waterman, “African Influence on the music of the Americas” 210

⁹⁸ Schuller, Gunther. *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1968.

to examine specific musical examples of both West African groups and jazz. However, within Schuller's musical analysis readers may also find a weak point in his work. *Early Jazz* was completed and published in 1968, and Schuller draws the majority of his West African music examples from Jones's work, *Studies in African Music*, published in 1959. As a result, many of Schuller's assumptions and conclusions, in fact the majority of information about traditional West African music in general, seems to be drawn exclusively from Jones's work. At the time, Jones's work was considered a valuable examination of West African music

It is not hard to see why Schuller relied on Jones's work to gain information on West African music, as it was greatly respected at the time of its publication. The remedy to Jones's use of staggered bar lines to represent perceived changes in accentual pattern according to Agawu, can be found in the work of David Locke who, "understands ensemble textures as isochronous rather than polychronous and based on a recurring cycle of beats."⁹⁹ Unfortunately for Schuller, Locke's work had not been published by the time *Early Jazz* was published. Therefore, though Schuller's work is valuable because he attempts a direct comparison between West African traditional music and jazz, it must be read with both a critical eye and knowledge of West African music studies that have come after its publication. With that being said, Schuller does provide the reader with some important insights on the retention of West African music in jazz.

Schuller begins his investigation of the origins of jazz like many other scholars with the assertion that jazz must be thought of as a true synthesis. He states that jazz was "brought to the New World in part from Africa and in part from Europe."¹⁰⁰ As a result, jazz has become music

⁹⁹ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 67

¹⁰⁰ Schuller, *Early Jazz*, 3

that is a “compound of African rhythmic, formal, sonoric, and expressive elements and European rhythmic and harmonic practices.”¹⁰¹ Schuller states that it is “tempting” for scholars of jazz to “categorize this or that aspect of jazz as deriving exclusively from either the African or the European tradition.”¹⁰² However he emphasizes the fact that many elements, for example rhythm and harmony, are an equal synthesis of African and European influence.

In his article, “The significance of the Relationship Between Afro-American Music and West African Music,” Olly Wilson seems also to be influenced by Jones’ work on West African music. First, Wilson makes mention of the occurrence of ‘multimeter’ in West African music. For example, he states “Polyrhythm is an Afro-American adaptation of West African practice of multimeter.”¹⁰³ Furthermore, Wilson provides his own transcriptions of traditional West African drum ensembles. These transcriptions are done in the same manner as Jones’, complete with multiple time signatures for each instrument and staggered bar lines.

It should be noted that all of the examples of early scholarship presented here provide valuable information of the influence that West African traditional music has had on the creation and development of jazz. However, readers must be aware of the dates of these publications and the view of both West African and African American music held at that time. As times change, so does available scholarship on jazz and the influence that West African traditional music has had on its development.

Modern jazz scholarship can be differentiated from much of the early scholarship by the use of a more sensitive view of African American culture as well as a deeper understanding of

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 3

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 4

¹⁰³ Olly Wilson, “The Significance of the Relationship Between Afro-American Music and West African Music,” (*The Black Perspective in Music* Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring, 1974), pp.3-22,) 9

West African traditional music. For example, in a study on the influence that African traditional pedagogy has had on the education of young jazz musicians, Wilkins states, “Our inability to trace cultural contributions to specific African ethnic groups forces us to acknowledge still another impediment to revealing the specific roots of what we identify as African practices.”¹⁰⁴ Wilkins’ statement is characteristic of the renewed understanding in African and African American scholarship that musical and cultural activities in West Africa cannot easily be summarized under the umbrella term ‘African music’ or ‘African culture’. This is one of the reasons modern scholarship specifically identifies West Africa as being the focal point of influence in jazz, rather than the whole African continent.

James Lincoln Collier’s article in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* is a good example of this new view on the complex nature of African music. Collier identifies that although the music of West Africa is diverse, the cultural groups being enslaved in America did share some similarities. Collier states that West African music was for the most part “functional, intended to accompany religious ceremonies and ecstatic dancing, to inspire hunters, to make work easier...it was woven into the culture.”¹⁰⁵ According to Collier these are common characteristics of the majority of West African music.

Samuel A. Floyd’s work, though relatively new, has had an influence on many recent works. His book, *The Power of Black Music*, encompasses African music throughout the diaspora, though he is primarily concerned with African American music. Floyd investigates many different aspects of African American music in his work; however, the primary concern for

¹⁰⁴ Christopher Wilkins, “The Influence of West African Pedagogy upon the Education of New Orleans Jazz Musicians,” (*Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1. Selected Papers from the 1993 National Conference on Black Music Research. (Spring 1994), pp. 25-42,) 29

¹⁰⁵ James Lincoln Collier, “Jazz: Origins and Early History; African American Background,” *New Grove Online*, ed. L. Macy, (Accessed 12 September 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

this dissertation is Floyd's assertion that much of the West African musical traits retained in African American musical activity can be found as a result of religious concepts and practices that have also been retained. Floyd provides as an example the ring-shout activities that have been instrumental in retaining West African traditional musical traits in African American music. This work is valuable to my dissertation because it provides important information about the retention of African musical traits in jazz, and it also provides a counter argument to other sources that state that African Americans in the United States were forced to abandon their religious practices in order to conform to the Protestant and Baptist practices.

In a similar fashion to Collier, Floyd presents a new view on the role traditional West African religious beliefs had on the shaping of jazz. Floyd gives evidence of the retention of religious gods and customs in African American activities that led to the development of jazz. In particular, Floyd identifies the importance of the ring shout as an activity that helped to retain the call-and-response performance structure that links jazz to West African traditional music. Floyd states, "In New Orleans, as in other cities, African Americans practiced ring ceremonies...these activities helped to create jazz."¹⁰⁶ This is a significant development in modern scholarship because Floyd's assertions are in contrast to Waterman. Waterman states that African American slaves in North America were forced to give up their religious beliefs as a result of overbearing Protestant slave owners. According to Waterman, "with the loss of their gods the slaves had no reason to retain the music and the rhythms associated with them."¹⁰⁷ Although Floyd makes it clear that he does not view jazz as an exclusive offspring of West African traditional music, he stresses that the retention of West African religious practices was of the utmost importance in the

¹⁰⁶ Samuel A. Floyd Jr., *The Power of Black Music*, (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1995,) 81

¹⁰⁷ Waterman, Richard A. "'Hot' Rhythm in Negro Music," 29

retention of traditional musical techniques. In fact, he is quick to point out that the “impetus for the development of this music was ritual, the ring ritual of the transplanted Africans extended and elaborated through spirituals and folk rags.”¹⁰⁸

Not only did modern jazz scholarship usher in new ideas about musical and cultural influences that helped to develop the style of music, it also brought about jazz scholarship from many different viewpoints, including those of the historians, ethnomusicologists and performing artists. Lewis Porter, Michael Ullman and Edward Hazell’s work, *Jazz From its Origins to the Present*, is a history of jazz textbook that explores activities in African American music from the music of the slaves until 1970s jazz-fusion. This work is unique to modern jazz scholarship because Porter, Ullman, and Hazell question the strength of the link between jazz and West African traditional music. In fact, they are particularly concerned with Schuller’s comparison between recordings of West African traditional music and early jazz. Porter et al suggest, “those who first listen to a recording of authentic African drumming, even those recordings recommended by Schuller, and then hear a recording of early jazz, will be surprised, not by the essential resemblances of the two, but by their obvious differences.”¹⁰⁹ These authors do concede that jazz was indeed influenced by West African music. As they state, “There are parallels between some African music and African American music.”¹¹⁰ However taking a conscientiously historical view of jazz they caution that, “It was impossible for African music to survive unchanged in America, given the conditions in which African Americans were placed...African music depends on a stable community, if only so that players may learn their

¹⁰⁸ Floyd, *The Power of Black Music*, 84

¹⁰⁹ Lewis Porter, Michael Ullman, and Edward Hazell, *Jazz From Its Origins To The Present*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993,) 8

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 8

parts. The music reflects a shared world view which must have changed with the radical dislocation that slavery caused.”¹¹¹

Eileen Southern’s book, *the Music of Black Americans*, is a general history of African American music. Southern’s work is not limited to jazz, nor is it limited to African American music in North America. It encompasses the musical history of slavery throughout the Americas and the development of African American history, including jazz along the way. She touches on the influences of African traditional music on African American music only briefly in a section titled “African Retentions in the New World.” In this section Southern describes the hardships of African slaves who were taken from their land in chains without material possessions to the Americas. She states, “Although they could bring no material objects with them, they retained memories of the rich cultural traditions they had left behind in the mother land and passed their traditions down to their children.”¹¹² With regard to the creation of a new African American music she states, “Despite the interaction of African and European cultural patterns in black communities with the resultant emergence of new *Afro-American* patterns, there persisted among black musicians, a predilection for certain performance practices, certain habits, certain musical instruments, and certain ways of shaping music to meet their needs in the new environment that had roots in the African experience.”¹¹³ However, like Waterman before her, Southern does not take the time to specifically explain what these ‘certain’ ways of doing things were.

While new histories of jazz are published at a frequent pace, Alyn Shipton’s *A New History of Jazz* published in 2001, is one of the most recent and comprehensive histories of jazz

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 9

¹¹² Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History*, (2nd ed. New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1983,) 23

¹¹³ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 24

to date. Shipton's exploration of jazz, like so many others, contains an extensive history of African American slave life and the precursors of jazz. What sets Shipton's history apart from others is the depth to which the author delves to tell his story. Shipton devotes a good deal of his introduction to the retention of West African traditional music in jazz and the process by which it synthesized with Western European music. Shipton states, "Among African Americans, the West African notion of pitch and of rhythm brought to the American continent became subject to the twin processes known as acculturation and enculturation, the first being the evolution of a new culture from the meeting of two existing ones, and the second being the passing on to one generation from another the cultural values of a society."¹¹⁴ It is clear from Shipton's words that the two existing cultures that met to create the new American culture were West African and Western European. Furthermore, it should be noted that the passing of cultural values from one generation to another, indicated by Shipton as enculturation, includes values from both older generations of African slaves and their white owners.

While Shipton stresses the importance of the retention of traditional West African musical traits in the development of jazz, he also recognizes that it is the synthesis of these traits with European musical traits that is most important in the creation of jazz. He states, "Undoubtedly, African influences alone were hugely important in defining the initial characteristics of jazz, but...many other ingredients were also significant."¹¹⁵ He concludes, "It is therefore reasonable to suppose that jazz is a synthetic music from a wider range of sources than have traditionally been explored."¹¹⁶ Unfortunately, aside from investigating the

¹¹⁴ Alyn Shipton, *New History of Jazz*, (London; New York; Continuum, 2001,) 6

¹¹⁵ Shipton, *New History of Jazz*, 7

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 7

relationship between European folk song and West African musical traits, Shipton stops short of presenting the ‘wider range’ of influences he states should be explored.

Paul Berliner on the other hand, does identify a wider range of influences that have helped to shape jazz. In his work *Thinking in Jazz*, Berliner states that Native American music also played a role in the development of jazz, although he mentions it only in passing. Berliner, Anthony Seeger, and Alan Merriam represent a group of ethnomusicologists who have examined the influence that West African traditional music has had on jazz.

Merriam, in an article called “Music in American Culture,” divides American music into four major musical streams in American music; academic music, white American folk music, popular music, and African American folk music. In regards to African American music Merriam states, “it seems reasonably clear that the idiom derives from both European and African influences and that as a result, something distinctive has emerged.”¹¹⁷ This article by Merriam is particularly useful in understanding the ebb and flow that has occurred concerning the influence of West African traditional music on jazz. For example he states, “An awareness of the African background of jazz has waxed and waned ascribing an African connection to it became more or less fashionable as a general American interest in Africa became more or less fashionable.”¹¹⁸ This article by Merriam provides a historical perspective on the West African influence in jazz. The strength of this work is found in the fact that Merriam analyzes anthropological studies of American music and traces them to ethnomusicological studies, which have been influenced by their ideas.

¹¹⁷ Alan P. Merriam, “Music in American Culture,” *American Anthropologist* (Vol. 57, No. 6, (Dec. 1955), pp.1173-1181.) 1174

¹¹⁸Merriam, “Music in American Culture,” 1176

In a brief entry on the synthesis of musics in the Americas, Anthony Seeger tells us “Members of different cultures were frequently mixed together in the Americas...Out of this forced cultural encounter the descendants of enslaved Africans developed new cultures in the Americas.”¹¹⁹ In addition to addressing West African traits that influenced many music styles found in South America, Seeger also cites the music of West Africa as being important for the retention of traditional African music in jazz. He states, “Among West African retentions were frequent use of layered, interlocking rhythm patterns, an aesthetics based on the blending of a variety of timbres, active interaction between audiences and performers...and the use of music to express emotional states.”¹²⁰

Berliner’s *Thinking in Jazz* is considered an excellent example of modern jazz scholarship. Berliner looks at jazz improvisation and group performance from the player’s perspective by incorporating numerous interviews from many well-known jazz musicians. He then interprets the given information with ethnomusicological considerations towards the effects jazz has had on African American culture and the effects African American culture has had on jazz. Through Berliner’s interviews we are able to understand how jazz musicians view the effects that West African music has had on the development of jazz.

In one instance of West African influence on jazz, Berliner highlights the importance of a jazz group to establish a steady groove. He equates the groove of a jazz rhythm section to the beat established by West African drum ensembles. In an interview with Berliner, one jazz saxophonist articulates the effect a good rhythm section groove has on him and his band mates

¹¹⁹ Anthony Seeger, “Americas: Encountering and Mixing Communities and Traditions, African Music in the Americas,” (*New Grove Online*, ed. L. Macy, (Accessed 12 September 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>)

¹²⁰ *Ibid*

by stating, “Its like the way an African hits a drum. He hits it a certain way, and after period of time, you feel it more than you did when he first started.”¹²¹

Directly addressing the interaction between West African traditional music and Western European music Berliner states, “In some instances, varied music systems born on two disparate continents join on yet a third continent, where they cross-fertilize one another, producing new stylistic fusions that eventually assert their independence from their parent traditions.”¹²² This concept of cross-fertilization, along with the performer viewpoint provided by Berliner’s interviews make his work very similar to that of Nathan T. Davis. However, while both Berliner and Davis provide the perspective of both ethnomusicologist and performing artist, Davis is unique to this study because unlike Berliner, he, himself, represents the two perspectives.

The strength of Davis’ scholarship in jazz resides in the fact that he is both a professional musician and ethnomusicologist working in the field of jazz. This combination of experiences has allowed him to produce a diverse and comprehensive examination of jazz. Berliner interviewed Davis while doing preliminary research for *Thinking in Jazz*. None of that interview was used in the book, but perhaps the interview influenced Berliner. While Berliner mentions the impact of Native American music on jazz, Davis goes one step further by explicitly stating the importance of recognizing the role of Native American culture in the development of jazz and the lack of recognition that influence has received. He states, “Perhaps one of the most

¹²¹ Paul F. Berliner, *Thinking In Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*, (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994,) 349

¹²² *Ibid*, 489

overlooked cultural contributions to the development of African American music is that of the American Indians.”¹²³

In another similarity, Davis also provides his own thoughts on the processes of acculturation and cross-fertilization. Davis states, “Jazz is a music resulting from years of acculturation, adaptation, and assimilation of both West African and West European cultures in the United States...We must also recognize that jazz includes all the various forms of music resulting from this cultural exchange.”¹²⁴ Davis specifically identifies the African influence on this cross-fertilization as ‘Africanization’. “Cross-fertilization, the act of assimilating the various forms of fragmented African cultures with the diversified forms of European cultures, was the first step in the construction of a purely new and indigenous music—African American music. African American music then is a combination of predominantly Western African, Western European, Native American...music.”¹²⁵

Davis continues to explain the process of cross-fertilization, by stating, “For cross-fertilization to occur two or more cultures must equally share in the process of cross-fertilizing, otherwise one culture will simply be assimilated into the more dominant one. In the case of African-American music, the domination of the West European culture was neutralized by the process of Africanization.”¹²⁶ Finally, he states “Most African American music goes much further than the commonly recognized contribution of rhythm. African harmony and melody

¹²³ Nathan T. Davis, *African American Music: A Philosophical Look at African American Music in Society*, (Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing, 1996,) 7

¹²⁴ Nathan T. Davis, *Writings In Jazz*, (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 2002,) 14

¹²⁵ Davis, *African American Music*, 7

¹²⁶ Davis, *Writings in Jazz*, 19

played a major role in establishing the meaningful tonalities that constitute jazz.”¹²⁷ It should be noted that very few scholars recognize the contribution of West African harmony in the development of jazz.

David Baker is another scholar who provides the perspective of performing artist. Baker is best known as a proponent of jazz education, however he is also a prolific jazz composer, and began his career as a jazz trombonist. In his work, *Jazz Pedagogy*, Baker cogently identifies one of the problems that plagues jazz scholarship with regard to identifying West African musical influence. Baker states, “Most of the writing about jazz has been from the perspective of what is valid within the parameters of Western aesthetics and traditions. Many people are now coming to the realization that these are not the proper conditions under which to make value judgments.”¹²⁸

Baker characterizes the influence West African traditional music has had on his own composition process by stating, “I think that I’m very much indebted to African music for the way I feel and the way I work with rhythm.” Additionally, Baker cites specific rhythmic techniques that he employs, he states, “The thing that shows up in all my music, is a concern for rhythm—meter, time...I would also say polymeter...”¹²⁹ Finally, Baker summarizes his artistic work by stating, “I view music in a decidedly African way, as a total experience and not apart from other aspects of life.”¹³⁰ It is evident from these statements that not only has traditional West African music influenced Baker’s artistic output, but also as a cultural experience.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 17

¹²⁸ David N. Baker, *Jazz Pedagogy: A Comprehensive Method of Jazz Education for Teacher and Student*, (Chicago: Maher Publishing Company Inc. 1981,) 7

¹²⁹ David N. Baker, Linda M. Belt and Herman C. Hudson, *The Black Composer Speaks*, (Metuchen, NJ; Lodon: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1978,) 17-18

¹³⁰ Baker, *The Black Composer Speaks*, 18

Norman Weinstein's *A Night in Tunisia* is an investigation of the imaging of African thematic material in jazz. Weinstein pays almost exclusive attention to recorded jazz with only cursory mention of interaction between African and African American musicians or the political and cultural ramification of the use of African musical images in jazz. This work is useful to my research in two ways: it provides an account of the intentional use of West African material in jazz by African American musicians, and it provides many valuable interviews with those musicians from which other information may be gleaned. Weinstein's work provides a solid base from which scholars can delve into the cultural ramification of the use of African musical material in jazz.

In addition, Weinstein presents a list of criteria for determining the extent to which a musician uses African music in jazz. He lists six "general characteristics of most African music which should be considered when exploring this connection:"¹³¹

1. Multileveled rhythmic activity forms the core of many musical events.
2. Improvisation is a key performance value
3. Musical events invite collective participation.
4. Vocalization styles, realized both through human voices and instruments, emphasize the rhythms and colors of passionate speech.
5. Musical events have a moral, political, and spiritual function coterminous with their entertainment function
6. Music can be directed to generations of deceased ancestors as well as the living and yet-to-be-born.¹³²

¹³¹ Norman C. Weinstein, *A Night in Tunisia*, Metuchen NJ; (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1992) 5

Weinstein suggests these characteristics for determining the use of African music in jazz. However, these characteristics not specific enough to qualify as identifying characteristics of African music, in fact many of these characteristics may be found in music containing no West African music at all. Weinstein does provide a secondary list of more specific characteristics found in jazz that employs elements of traditional African music.

1. A traditional African melody and harmony is partially or totally utilized by the jazz composer in a formal composition or improvisation.
2. A traditional African instrument (mbira, kora, drums, various hand-held percussion instruments) is used, as it would be played in an African context; or the instrument is modified in design (mechanically or electronically) to meet the needs of the African American jazz artist.
3. African musicians play with African American jazz artists in one of a variety of settings, such as: informal jam sessions, rehearsals, concerts and recording sessions regardless of geographical location.
4. The jazz composer provides extra-musical texts including album liners notes, which may include clarifications of musical titles evoking Africa, concert notes, or published interviews explicating the use of African musical material in their own music.
5. Non-African jazz musician, who chooses to visit, work, study, teach or record in Africa.

This second list is much more useful in determining the use of African music in jazz, especially in the music of Weston, Lateef and Blakey.

There have been certain social and cultural connections made between jazz and West African music that are particularly important and should be identified. Collier identifies a

¹³² Weinstein, *A Night in Tunisia*, 7

connection between audience interaction at both jazz and West African music performances in his book, *The Making of Jazz: A Comprehensive History*. Audience participation is a strong example of West African social interaction that has appeared in jazz. In a paragraph concerning the interaction of jazz musicians and their audience members, Collier states, “This social element comes into jazz through its African heritage.”¹³³ Collier continues his investigation of a West African sense of society and culture as it relates to African American jazz by stating, “Despite [Africa’s] diversity, there are certain common characteristics that underlie most African cultures.”¹³⁴ Collier describes one of these characteristics as “social intensity,” a term he uses to denote the closeness of many African American communities and the lifecycle activities that are celebrated by the whole community rather than in private, as is often the case in contemporary Euro-American communities. He attributes the development of jazz as a social activity to its connection with West African music and its function in West African traditional society.

In a similar manner, Schuller also recognizes a connection between jazz and West African traditional music in the function they play in society. For example, jazz and West African music both “originate in a total vision of life, in which music, unlike ‘art music’ of Europe, is not a separate, autonomous social domain. African music...is conditioned by the same stimuli that animate not only African philosophy and religion, but the entire social structure.”¹³⁵ As a result, Schuller states, “In certain fundamental musico-sociological aspects,” jazz represents a transplanted continuation of indigenous African traditions.¹³⁶

¹³³ James Lincoln Collier, *The Making of Jazz: A Comprehensive History*, (New York; Dell Publishing Co. Inc. 1978,) 6

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 7

¹³⁵ Schuller, *Early Jazz*, 4

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 4

The retention of elements of West African tone languages also bears some consideration in the development of jazz. In their discussion on timbre manipulation in jazz, Gridley and Rave acknowledge the influence of African tonal languages on the manipulation of timbre in music making. They write, “It is predictable that a culture which requires extensive pitch and tone-quality manipulation for everyday communication should create a music that is distinctive for its masterful tonal decoration. In regard to this kind of tone decoration, jazz reveals its debt to Africa.”¹³⁷ While the use of tonal languages among West African ethnic groups may have some influence over tonal manipulation in jazz, I believe that there is a stronger connection between the complex tonal manipulation of African instruments and that of instruments used in jazz. For example, the auxiliary buzzing of the snare on the Dagomba *gongon* drum and the use of mirliton to cover holes in resonating gourds of the many different West African xylophones may correspond to the use of the snare drum in the drum set, and the vocal growl created when playing a saxophone or a trumpet.

It should be pointed out that Gridley and Rave make reference to one tonal language and African culture making it appear that there was one tonal language from West Africa that influenced jazz. In actuality there are many different tonal languages that slaves brought with them from West Africa to the New World. The fact that slaves were separated from their families and their communities and forced to live with strangers who spoke a different language is one of the reasons African Americans borrowed elements of European culture and music to merge with their own. It is important to understand that it was not just one African culture, but many similar West African cultural traits that merged with many similar European cultural traits

¹³⁷ Mark C. Gridley and Wallace Rave, “Towards Identification of African Traits in Early Jazz,” *The Black Perspective in Music*, Vol. 12, No. 1, (Spring, 1984), pp 44-56,) 52-53

to create jazz. A great majority of the interactions that lead to this synthesis is said to have happened at Place Congo.

One of the most frequently cited examples of the performance of West African traditional music in the United States by slaves and former slaves occurred at gatherings in Place Congo, also known as Congo Square in New Orleans. References to the importance of this gathering place are found in works by Shipton, Goffin, and Southern. There is even the thought that the first generations of jazz musicians might have witnessed West African traditional music as it was performed in the square. Brown claims that early jazz musicians had a link to West African traditional music by stating that Congo Square was still part of the memory of early New Orleans musicians.¹³⁸ Brown suggests that the performances in Congo Square were still fresh in their memories and jazz musicians drew upon these experiences when creating jazz music. However, Porter and Ullman state that traditional African performances “stopped much earlier than was previously believed, perhaps as early as 1835, so they could not have had a direct influence on jazz.”¹³⁹ They continue, “Still, jazz musicians might have heard something like African music in a modified form.”¹⁴⁰

Like Porter et al, Martin Williams questions the direct connection early jazz has with West African traditional music. He states, “The history of jazz conventionally begins with music from the Western Congo and evolves as a style in New Orleans around the turn of the century. The contrast between the percussive music of Africa and New Orleans jazz is startling, not so much in that these musics seem similar as that, in some very basic ways, they do not seem

¹³⁸ Brown “Postmodern Jazz Theory,” 242

¹³⁹ Porter, Ullman, and Hazell, *Jazz From its Origins to the Present*, 8

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 8

similar.”¹⁴¹ Williams goes on to cite the use of Western European melodic instruments and the implementation of harmony and finally states, “But the gross dissimilarity is in rhythm.” He continues by stating, “Congolese music is so sure and so complex rhythmically as to make early jazz seem child’s play.”¹⁴² Finally, he claims, “It is only in quite recent developments that jazz has begun to approach the rhythmic complexity of African music.”¹⁴³ The answer to why, according to some scholars, early jazz sounds nothing like traditional West African music may also be found in the social activities of New Orleans.

While virtually every scholar cites Congo Square as a major location for the evidence of African retentions, Shipton pays particular attention to the relationship between African American and Creole communities in New Orleans at the time. According to Shipton, the French Quarter of New Orleans located downtown consisted primarily of Creoles while the African American community was located uptown. He states, “It seems that this ‘uptown’ population continued many of the more explicitly African elements of plantation music.”¹⁴⁴ Shipton includes the drumming at Congo Square in the activities of the uptown African American community. He states “during the 1890s Creole society in New Orleans was at pains to distance itself from all things African to identify with all things white.”¹⁴⁵ Likewise Creole musicians at that time also attempted to distance themselves from an association with African Americans, and by extension, West Africa. Both Nathan Davis and Grace King cite the conversion to Christianity and the adaptation of European customs as reasons why Creoles and

¹⁴¹ Martin Williams, *The Jazz Tradition*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1983,) 52

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 52

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 52

¹⁴⁴ Shipton, *A New History of Jazz*, 23

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 23

lighter skinned African Americans sought to distance themselves from African culture.¹⁴⁶ Davis states, “Whereas Western European culture first served as a substitute for [West African Culture] it later took on a cultural life of its own, by contributing to various forms of African American music.”¹⁴⁷ This may be one of the reasons that early jazz was played with less rhythmic complexity than later jazz. “It is from the interrelationships between these two groups, [Creole and African American], that early jazz grew up within that city.”¹⁴⁸ It is not surprising then that some early jazz, perhaps music specifically from the French Quarter sounded simpler rhythmically than traditional West African music.

3.2.1 Summary

One might say that early jazz scholars, like Creole musicians, tried to separate jazz from any association with traditional West African music, and refused to identify any relationship between traditional West African music and jazz. The next generation of scholars reacted against such Eurocentric thinking by attempting to prove that jazz was a direct descendant of West African traditional music. However, this Afrocentric view or ‘primitism’ as Lee B. Brown calls it, was also too extreme, and became an untenable position. Eventually scholars would position their assessment of the influences of jazz as mixture of West African and Western European music. Yet, as we have seen from the works presented here the degree to which West African and Western European elements have influenced jazz is quite debatable.

¹⁴⁶ Davis, *African American Music*, 11; See also Grace King, *New Orleans: The Place and the People*, (New York: Macmillan, 1895)

¹⁴⁷ Davis, *African American Music*, 11

¹⁴⁸ Shipton, *A New History of Jazz*, 24

While assessing scholarship on the development of early jazz, it is vital that readers keep in mind publication dates of the scholarship, because works published earlier in the twentieth century are influenced by other scholarship of the same era. As a result, many of the influential works on the development of early jazz are influenced by inaccurate depictions of West African traditional music. While these early sources on jazz development are useful for understanding the influence West African music has had on jazz, they must be read with an awareness of their shortcomings. Among modern scholars there is an understanding that jazz is a synthesis of West African and Western European musical techniques and aesthetics, however there is yet to be a consensus as to exactly which traits are West African and which traits are European. It is in the identification of specific traits that future scholars will hopefully turn their attentions.

The preceding introductory material has been presented in an attempt to lay a foundation for the subsequent social and musical analysis of the lives and musical activities of Art Blakey, Yusef Lateef and Randy Weston. The central questions that this dissertation will address is what are the immediate social and cultural influences that shaped the music of Blakey, Lateef and Weston, and how did interaction with foreign West African communities encourage these musicians to use African traditional music in their works?

**PART II: SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND MUSICAL INFLUENCES OF ART BLAKEY,
YUSEF LATEEF, AND RANDY WESTON**

4.0 CHAPTER 4: THE GREAT MIGRATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

In Part two of this dissertation I focus on the social and musical influences that helped to shape Weston, Blakey and Lateef as culturally conscious musicians. Although each man was born and raised in a different urban area of the United States, I have attempted to present here a broad view of their early lives at the same time pointing out the similarities and differences in their influences. This examination is for the most part chronological; therefore any fragmentation in the biographical information is a result of my attempts to connect somewhat distant communities. Weston, Blakey, and Lateef were all born roughly around the same time, a time that was filled not only with hardships but also great social change for African Americans. Due to both the hardships and the social advancements during this time African Americans born around the 1920s experienced life-changing events. These events would eventually lead to the Civil Rights movement and political activism during the 1950s and 60s. The African American communities that each musician grew up in formed as a result of the Great Migration.

4.1 THE GREAT MIGRATION

African American communities in the North were small and scattered before World War I. Even in large cities like New York, African American communal enclaves were restricted to only a few blocks and were surrounded by white communities. One example is Harlem. Originally

Harlem was primarily an upper class white neighborhood and African Americans were restricted to a very small section of the neighborhood.¹⁴⁹ However, just before the turn of the century the African American population began to increase and Harlem soon became very influential in the history of African American culture. Likewise, the Pittsburgh neighborhood of little Haiti, now known as the Hill District, soon became a significant African American neighborhood when construction began on the river to develop the downtown area. Additionally, Black Bottom, an African American community in Detroit was established as the population of African Americans moving northward grew exponentially during the Great Migration and the automobile industry boom.

The development of northern African American communities began around 1880 when African Americans started to move away from southern rural areas into northern urban areas. The Great Migration began as a trickle that turned into a flood that lasted until after World War I.¹⁵⁰ During this time, it is estimated that about five million rural southern African Americans migrated to urban areas and northward to escape the racial humiliation and persecution they faced on a daily basis throughout the small towns and rural areas of the South.

As African Americans migrated north, they also began to gravitate toward major cities. Despite the close quarters of urban living southern African Americans felt a sense of freedom in the North because they were able to escape much of the racial discrimination they had experienced in the rural South. The greatest numbers of African Americans fled from Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. They traveled primarily toward flourishing

¹⁴⁹ Jim Haskins, *The Cotton Club*, (New York; Hippocrene Books, 1977)

¹⁵⁰ Robert Darden, *People Get Ready: A New History of Black Gospel Music*, (New York: Continuum, 2004), 131; and Bernice Johnson Reagon, *If You Don't Go, Don't Hinder Me: The African American Sacred Song Tradition*. (Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001) 13

industrial cities like Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and New York, where new jobs were most abundant.¹⁵¹

Recently transplanted African Americans faced fresh hardships as they moved northward. In many places long established northern African Americans had assimilated the customs of northern Anglo Americans, particularly their religious customs. Southern African Americans faced a new challenge interacting their northern peer groups and were not easily accepted into these pre-established African American communities. Oftentimes as a result, migrating African Americans were forced to form their own communities and establish their own cultural centers.

Around the turn of the twentieth century many African Americans moved to Pittsburgh and its surrounding areas as part of the Great Migration. African Americans first began to move into Pittsburgh as early as 1885 to take advantage of the city's teeming steel mill industry. African Americans living in Pittsburgh had few choices for work in the early twentieth century. African American historian Walter Worthington states, that "the work [African Americans] had to do to survive at the turn of the century was work nobody wanted to do."¹⁵²

Like many urban areas in the United States, Pittsburgh communities were segregated. One of the first African American communities in Pittsburgh was called Little Haiti. Little Haiti was home to Art Blakey, Kenny Clark, Joe Harris and many other musicians. Harris States that "Art Blakey and Ray Brown introduced me to Bebop drumming when we all lived in the hill district."¹⁵³ This African American community was established by the construction occurring alongside the confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio rivers. Little Haiti was named

¹⁵¹ Darden, *People Get Ready*, 131

¹⁵² Walter Worthington, Interview by Maurice Levy, (Tape recording, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Oral History of Music in Pittsburgh Collection, June 14 1993)

¹⁵³ Joe Harris, interview by Jason Squinobal, February 9, 2009.

in deference to the Haitian revolution. The neighborhood known as the Hill District grew out of this community as developers pushed African Americans further and further up into the hillside farmland.¹⁵⁴

According to jazz drummer Joe Harris, the segregation of Pittsburgh communities also carried over into the entertainment sectors of Pittsburgh. However, it is Harris's opinion that segregation was not necessarily a negative thing for Pittsburgh musicians.¹⁵⁵ African American musicians had their own clubs in which to perform. Harris states that segregation "created a sense of solidarity for African Americans."¹⁵⁶ Clyde Edwards Broadus adds, "Everything in Pittsburgh was segregated."¹⁵⁷ As an amateur local tap dancer Broadus traveled all over Pittsburgh and its surrounding neighborhoods to compete in amateur talent shows. In his experience, the city of Pittsburgh exhibited relatively little racism; however, the further away from Pittsburgh he traveled he encountered more incidents of racism and prejudice. The fact that Broadus did not experience racism in downtown Pittsburgh does not mean that the city was free of racism. While in the city Broadus spent the majority of his time in the Hill District, others who ventured into the city center do report incidents of racism.

The Great Migration had a huge impact on Detroit. Before the turn of the century, Detroit had one of the lowest African American populations in the North. Subsequently, Detroit experienced the highest rate of growth in African American populations of any northern urban area. The European immigration population in Detroit declined leading up to World War I and

¹⁵⁴ Worthington, Interview by Maurice Levy, 1993

¹⁵⁵ Harris, interview by Squinobal

¹⁵⁶ Joe Harris, Interview by Maurice Levy, (Tape recording, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Oral History of Music in Pittsburgh Collection, 1994)

¹⁵⁷ Clyde Edwards Broadus, Interview by Maurice Levy, (Tape recording, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Oral History of Music in Pittsburgh Collection, October 22, 1997)

with the demand for more jobs due to the war, the city saw its largest leap in African American population after 1915. This influx of job seekers led to the development of a significant African American community on the city's east side. As southern African Americans began to move into the city, the majority of these new residents were clustered east of Detroit's downtown center. This clustering community soon became an expanding neighborhood that would later be known as 'Black Bottom.' Like Pittsburgh, the population of Detroit was also significantly bifurcated. Historian Herb Boyd notes, "By the late 1890s only the theatres of the city were free of discrimination."¹⁵⁸

Detroit's booming auto industry, headed by the Ford Motor Company became a major draw for African Americans in search of work and opportunity. Boyd states, "for the many black migrants from Alabama and Mississippi who had settled in the city of Detroit, Mr. Ford's promise to pay five dollars a day, made three years before, was still the biggest news around. The influx of black Southerners that would swell Black Bottom to 120,000 people by 1930 was well under way."¹⁵⁹

The high influx of African Americans into Black Bottom created over-crowding which quickly led to poverty and despair. These poor living conditions proved to be an influential factor in the development of a unique brand of 'urban blues' that would have a positive influence on the musical development of Lateef. The influence of the Ford Motor Company can also be seen in the great many blues written by African American musicians about the Ford Company and Ford products. LeRoi Jones states, "One reason for this is the fact that Ford was one of the first companies to hire many [African Americans,] and the name Ford became synonymous with

¹⁵⁸ Herb Boyd, *Detroit Music History*, <http://www.ipl.org/div/detjazz/Reading.html>

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*

Northern opportunity, and the Ford Model-T was one of the first automobiles [African Americans] could purchase—the poor man’s car.”¹⁶⁰ However Jones also cites many blues songs that disparage the working conditions in the Ford plants. Although African Americans were able to find steady work in Detroit, the positions available to them were jobs that no one else wanted to do, working in the furnace room melting down iron for die casts for example.¹⁶¹

In the 1890’s the first wave of African Americans from the Great Migration hit New York City. At the same time, eager real estate investors began building in Harlem at a very aggressive pace. The influx of new African American residents combined with the overdevelopment of Harlem encouraged African Americans to gravitate to Harlem and settle there. At that time, Harlem was full of new construction; it was a nice, clean, and new neighborhood. Not only were African Americans moving there, African American institutions also began moving their businesses to Harlem from downtown.¹⁶²

With the commencement of World War I in 1914, many European immigrants who had settled in New York City went back to their homelands to fight for their respective countries. This caused an abrupt halt to immigration of Europeans during the war and New York City was left with a labor shortage in industrial and munitions jobs. Fortunately, many of the African Americans who had relocated to the pristine new buildings of Harlem filled these jobs. Thus, migrating African Americans were fortunate to fall upon an ideal set of circumstances, a city with an abundance of jobs and affordable, desirable housing. As a result, Harlem residents were able to sustain a relatively affluent living and a culturally rich, high quality of life.

¹⁶⁰ LeRoi Jones, *Blues People*, (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1963) 97

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*

¹⁶² Haskins, *The Cotton Club*, 1977

The prosperous war times for African Americans living in New York created a unique situation in Harlem. Harlem was unique because it was the only black community to form in an exclusive residential area, and it was the largest community of African Americans in the North. However, like many neighborhoods in New York City at the time, Harlem did have its seedy side. The mob controlled many of the entertainment establishments and as a result, gambling, prostitution, and drugs soon found their way into the neighborhood. For the most part however, Harlem in the early twentieth century was prosperous and the community attracted many of America's most talented black artists. These artists found Harlem to be welcoming. They were able to perform in front of America's largest African American audiences. They were embraced by a group of their peers in a way that they had never experienced in predominantly white communities. The large gathering of artistic personalities, political writers and activists, and the variety of opportunities for self-expression provided the conditions for what is now referred to as the Harlem Renaissance.

4.2 EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES OF WESTON, BLAKEY AND LATEEF

Jazz pianist and composer Randy Weston was born in Brooklyn, New York, on April 06, 1926. He is best known in the jazz community for his use of African traditional material in both written compositions and improvisation. Weston was neither born nor raised in Africa; his familiarity of African musical elements was derived from independent research of available African music and literature. This exploration of his African heritage began in his early childhood under the guidance of his parents.

From an early age Weston sought out a diverse musical education. During his childhood he states, “I used to get early Folkways recordings—prison songs, field hollers, the old blues—so I was already searching.”¹⁶³ His parents had a deep love of music and a great appreciation for African American heritage. They strongly encouraged Weston’s search. “I grew up listening to Negro spirituals on my mother’s side, I listened to a lot of West Indian calypso on Pop’s side. So when I went over, [to Africa] I heard both in their raw form. I heard the basic rhythms that I recognized from the calypso music, and I heard some of the singing and hand clapping that I heard in the church on my mom’s side.”¹⁶⁴

Weston’s father influenced him greatly by introducing him to the music and concepts popular during the Harlem Renaissance. “My father took me to see Duke [Ellington] and Andy Kirk at the Sonia Ballroom and Brooklyn Palace. We’d hear [the calypso bands] Duke of Iron and Macbeth in Harlem... I grew up in a rich culture, a rich period.”¹⁶⁵ The rich period Weston talks about, the Harlem Renaissance period, most certainly had a profound influence on Weston’s musical development. Weston’s main musical influence during this time, Duke Ellington, will be examined below.

In addition to his exposure to diverse styles of music, Weston also sought out African American literature and historical texts. “As a boy I was always going to libraries, and my father would have at home books to learn more about my history, my heritage, because I certainly wasn’t getting it in the schools.”¹⁶⁶ Weston’s father always tried to instill the importance of Weston’s African heritage in him; he would tell Randy, “Africa is the past, the present, and the

¹⁶³ Russ Musto, “African Rhythms” *All About Jazz*, (February 2004)
<http://www.allaboutjazz.com>. (Accessed September 26, 2006)

¹⁶⁴ I. Gitler “Randy Weston,” *Downbeat* 31.6 (1964), 36

¹⁶⁵ Fred Bouchard, “Randy Weston’s Pan-African Revival” *Downbeat*, (November 1990), 20

¹⁶⁶ Musto, “African Rhythms,” February 2004

future.”¹⁶⁷ Weston’s father was a Panamanian born Jamaican and was very interested in the cultural writings of Marcus Garvey.¹⁶⁸ The writings of Marcus Garvey, paramount in shaping the Harlem Renaissance, had a profound effect on Weston, Lateef and Blakey.

Art Blakey was born in Pittsburgh in 1919. Blakey had quite a different childhood from that of Weston; it was a childhood that was much less nurturing than Weston’s and reflected the hardscrabble life commonly found in Pittsburgh at the time. Blakey’s mother died when he was a baby, just a few days after he was born, shortly there after his father abandoned him to foster care. Blakey had a tumultuous relationship with his father. In an interview with Rosenthal, Blakey states, “My father lived near where I lived, you know, and he never spoke to me or anything. It was a difference between, you know, the races, the prejudice [within] the black race. Mulattos didn’t speak to the blacks; blacks didn’t speak to mulattos.”¹⁶⁹ According to Blakey, his father was very light skinned. Once his mother died, Blakey’s father and the rest of his father’s family distanced themselves from Blakey and other family members from his maternal side.¹⁷⁰

Nathan Davis identifies the same racial divide among African Americans in his work, *African American Music: A Philosophical Look at African American Music in Society*. Davis identifies the upper-class community in Washington DC, a community that Duke Ellington grew up in, as the upper 400s. According to Davis, the upper 400s “refers to a group of elite African Americans who felt superior to less fortunate African Americans who had not reached a certain

¹⁶⁷ Ted Panken “African Soul” *Downbeat*, (October 1998,) 20

¹⁶⁸ Bouchard, “Randy Weston’s Pan-African Revival,” 20

¹⁶⁹ Rosenthal, David, “Conversation with Art Blakey,” (*The Black Perspective in Music*, XIV/3 (1986), 267-89,) 271

¹⁷⁰ Blakey’s Mother and her relatives were apparently very dark skinned African Americans the difference in skin complexion between his mother’s side and his father’s side caused racial tension between the two sides and ultimately led to Blakey’s father abandoning him.

level of social and economic stability.”¹⁷¹ While this example is based on economic status more than on skin tone, the two are linked to a certain extent. Often, African Americans with lighter skin acquired (marginally) higher economic status.

This social division occurred in many different communities in which a mix of skin-tones existed among its inhabitants. For example, there was a similar racial divide between Creoles and African Americans in New Orleans. According to Davis, and Paul F. Berliner this relationship was particularly tense around the turn of the 20th century. Tension found between Creoles and African Americans in New Orleans aided in the development of a distinction between more European sounding jazz and more African sounding jazz in the early twentieth century.¹⁷²

Davis states that in Washington DC, the upper 400s “bourgeois social climate played a role in shaping Ellington’s perspective on life. What may have been a superior attitude toward life was, in fact, a profound sense of self worth.”¹⁷³ Blakey also drew upon this racial discrimination in Pittsburgh, however, he found his darker skin to be a source of self-worth and pride as a reaction *against* the lighter skinned African American bourgeois social class.

Blakey’s school years were filled with episodes of racism. Speaking about the conditions of his school days Blakey states, “most of the teachers were white, and most of them were bigots.”¹⁷⁴ He tells a story that he was expelled from school when he presented a report on Africa that identified Africa as being the site of the first University. His teachers accused him of

¹⁷¹ Davis, *African American Music*, 22

¹⁷² See Davis, *African American Music*, 22; Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*,

¹⁷³ Davis, *African American Music*, 23

¹⁷⁴ Wayne Enstice, and Paul Rubin. *Jazz Spoken Here: Conversations With Twenty-two Musicians*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992) 18

lying. This school report is the origins of an interest in African culture, religion and music that would occupy a significant portion of Blakey's life from the 1940s through the 1960s.

Yusef A. Lateef was born William Emmanuel Huddleston on October 9, 1920 in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He moved to Detroit with his family at the age of five. Chattanooga, located in rural Tennessee, featured a strong religious community and both Lateef's paternal and maternal grandparents were deeply involved with the local religious community. Around the time of Lateef's birth the Pittsburgh radio station KDKA was just beginning its public broadcasts. Because of the remoteness of rural Chattanooga, evening radio provided an important source of entertainment for Lateef. One of the first musical acts Lateef remembers was the *Spike Jones Show*; he states, Jones "was a bandleader with a lot of humor in his music and they played all sorts of novelty tunes using strange instruments like kazoos and plungers."¹⁷⁵ This early exposure to the use of unconventional instruments in music performance would later spur Lateef's use of unconventional musical instruments in his own music.

In 1925 Lateef's family began to head north toward the northern urban centers, as did so many other African American families at the time. Lateef and his family first moved to Lorain, Ohio, and finally to Detroit where his father and grandfather both found work in the booming automobile industry. In Detroit, Lateef's family temporarily lived in the predominantly African American neighborhood of Paradise Valley, before finally settling in a second African American neighborhood known as Black Bottom. The Pentecostal churches of Black Bottom played an influential role in his early musical development and his deeply spiritual side. However it was the music of the nightclubs and bars that really hooked him.

¹⁷⁵ Yusef Lateef, *The Gentle Giant*, (Irvington NJ: Morton Books Inc., 2006) 2

In Paradise Valley, so named because of the large number of nightclubs and bars, Lateef first heard the traveling musicians of the Chitlin' Circuit. Like Weston, Lateef's parents took him to attend a variety of different types performances. He states "My parents often took me to the Koplín Theater on Gratiot, which featured fantastic stage shows."¹⁷⁶ Later in Black Bottom Lateef's family lived above the Arcadia Cinema. Lateef would listen to the music performed there every night. After their performances local musicians would come up to Lateef's apartment and visit his father. Yusef was twelve at the time and this was when he decided he would make music is occupation.

Not only was Lateef encouraged by local musicians to take up the profession, living in Black Bottom gave him access to some of the most prominent traveling African American musicians of the Harlem Renaissance movement as well. The bands of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and McKinney's Cotton Pickers had a great effect on him. Of course, he points out that being a saxophonist he was always most awed by the legendary saxophonists who performed with these bands.

Weston, Blakey, and Lateef spent their early childhoods in three distinctly different American cities, and each musician received vastly different nurturing from his parents. Yet at the same time, all three men had significant access to live musical performances of both local musicians and traveling big-name performers. Furthermore, Weston, Blakey, and Lateef would take from these childhood experiences a desire to know more about their African heritage and each would use that desire to create music infused with various kinds of African music.

¹⁷⁶ Lateef, *The Gentle Giant*, 12

The Harlem Renaissance had a profound effect on the early life of Weston, Blakey, and Lateef. Weston has called it the most important time of his life.¹⁷⁷ All three men developed a sense of pride in their African heritage at this time and each man began a journey that would eventually bring them together in the 1960s to create African inspired jazz. Therefore the Harlem Renaissance must be examined, not as a cultural movement confined to the New York City neighborhood of Harlem but as a cultural phenomenon that permeated prominent African American neighborhoods throughout the United States. Concepts brought to light during the Harlem Renaissance movement were most influential on the generation of the parents of Weston, Blakey, and Lateef.¹⁷⁸ Consequently, these became the first social and cultural traits to influence Weston, Blakey, and Lateef as children.

¹⁷⁷ Weston, interview by Squinobal

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*

5.0 CHAPTER 5: THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

The Harlem Renaissance began in the 1920s. While the Great Migration and development of Harlem were important factors that helped to bring about the Harlem Renaissance, this movement ultimately grew out of political activities of African Americans who were working hard to promote African American civil rights and cultural heritage. David L. Lewis notes that the Harlem Renaissance was a movement institutionally promoted by civil rights groups as a means to mitigate racism around the turn of the century. He states:

The Harlem Renaissance was a somewhat forced phenomenon, a cultural nationalism of the parlor, institutionally encouraged and directed by leaders of the national civil rights establishment for the paramount purpose of improving race relations in a time of extreme national backlash, caused in large part by economic gains won by Afro-Americans during the Great War.¹⁷⁹

One of the most important intellectual developments of the time was the concept of Pan-Africanism. Henry Sylvester Williams first used the term more than twenty years before the Renaissance movement in a November 1899 letter to a London associate.¹⁸⁰ According to Floyd Jr., in his book, *The Power of Black Music*, Pan-Africanism is the “belief that black people all over the world share an origin and a heritage, that the welfare of black people everywhere is inexorably linked, and that the cultural products of blacks everywhere should express their

¹⁷⁹ Davis L. Lewis, *The Harlem Renaissance Reader*, (David L. Lewis ed. New York; Viking, 1994) xv

¹⁸⁰ David L. Lewis, *Du Bois*, New York, (Henry Holt and Company, Inc. 1993) 248

particular fundamental beliefs.”¹⁸¹ Floyd continues by stating, “Pan-African thought seeks to glorify the African past, inculcate pride in African values, and promote unity among all people of African descent.”¹⁸² At the time Williams was the central organizer of a two-year-old African Association. This organization consisted of Afro-Caribbean professionals whose constitution “committed them to encourage the feeling of unity and to facilitate friendly intercourse among Africans in general; to promote and protect the interests of all subjects claiming African descent, wholly or in part, in British colonies and other places.”¹⁸³ W. E. B. Du Bois is widely considered the godfather of Pan-Africanism as it was implemented during the Harlem Renaissance, Lewis claims that Du Bois became familiar with the term less than a year after Williams first began using it.”¹⁸⁴

Du Bois took advantage of a rise in twentieth-century nationalism to promote the “idea of the solidarity of the world’s darker peoples, of the glories in the forgotten African past, and of the vanguard role destined to be played by Africans of the diaspora in the destruction of European imperialism.”¹⁸⁵ In Du Bois’ own words, he states:

From 1910 to 1920, I had followed sociology as the path to social reform and social uplift as a result of scientific investigation; then, in practice, I had conceived an interracial culture as superseding our goal of a purely American culture. Before I had conceived a program for this path, and after throes of bitter racial strife, I had emerged with a program of Pan-Africanism, as organized protection of the Negro world led by American Negroes.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Floyd, Jr., *The Power of Black Music*, 100

¹⁸² *Ibid*, 100

¹⁸³ Lewis, *Du Bois*, 248

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 248

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 8

¹⁸⁶ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B Du Bois*, (International Publishers 1968) 289

Du Bois encountered resistance against his Pan-African concepts even within the NAACP, an organization he was instrumental in organizing. He observed that many prominent board members had developed a disdain for anything that associated them with their African heritage. These African Americans resented and feared anything that linked them with their African culture, because they felt it was the source of the racial persecution they received from Anglo Americans. Many African Americans at this point in history wanted only to be thought of as Americans.¹⁸⁷ In response to the resistance he received against his work, Du Bois argued, “Africa appears as the father of mankind... The sense of beauty is the last and best gift of Africa to the world and the true essence of the Blackman’s soul.”¹⁸⁸ Statements like these spurred Weston, Lateef and Blakey to investigate their own African heritage and to use African musical influences in their music.

Despite the resistance that Du Bois received there were many influential political leaders who believed in the ideologies established by the concepts of Pan-Africanism. In fact, Du Bois’ version of Pan-Africanism is not the only one to influence African Americans during the Harlem Renaissance. Marcus Garvey found a strong following of African Americans in Harlem around 1920. His concept of Pan-Africanism however, was often at odds with those of Du Bois.

The concept of Pan-Africanism Floyd identifies can be equally associated with the writing of both Du Bois and Garvey. It can be said that Garvey’s concepts were equally important to the development of the Harlem Renaissance. As Jim Haskins suggests, the Harlem community became a large captive audience for Garvey and his back-to-Africa movement.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Manning Marable, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat*, (Boston; Twayne Publishers, 1986) 107

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 107

¹⁸⁹ Haskins, *The Cotton Club*, 37

Garvey is credited with instilling a sense of African nationalistic pride and unity throughout the diaspora. Garvey was born in Jamaica in 1887 and he moved to England in 1912 where he created the Universal Negro Improvement Foundation, the U.N.I.F. He had a particularly strong impact in New York, where he spent time in 1916.

John D. Baskerville also recognizes Garvey's contributions to the Harlem Renaissance. He states, "Garvey brought to the United States in 1916 a movement designed to redeem Africans in the diaspora."¹⁹⁰ To exemplify the importance of Garvey's writings on African Americans at the time of the Harlem Renaissance, Baskerville states, "To promote unity throughout the diaspora, Garvey espoused race consciousness through a concept called 'African fundamentalism.' It was a concept that signified a psychological return to Africa, along with the glorification of African cultural values and history and the rejection of outside influences."¹⁹¹

Many scholars recognize Garvey's work and the impact he had on African Americans during the Harlem Renaissance. L.W. Levine writes, "Garvey utilized the idea of Africa to touch deeply many of the yearnings and needs of his people. He was preaching more than the redemption of Africa, he was preaching the redemption of the entire Negro people, the revitalization of the entire black race."¹⁹² This view of Garvey highlights the important role his writings played in shaping the activities of the multitude of artists in Harlem during this Renaissance period.

¹⁹⁰ John D. Baskerville, *The Impact of Black Nationalist Ideology on American Jazz Music of the 1960s and 1970s*, (Lampeter, UK: The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd., 2003), 67

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 68

¹⁹² L. W. Levine, "Marcus Garvey and the politics of revitalization," In *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*, John Hope Franklin and August Meier, (Eds.) (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1982) 129

Both Garvey and Du Bois were striving for the improvement of African American life, and at their initial meetings they found accord with one another. However, their distinct concepts of Pan-Africanism soon collided. The primary distinction between Du Bois and Garvey is that Du Bois sought to achieve integration of African American and white American communities creating a consolidated American culture. Garvey, on the other hand, was more interested in encouraging a separate African American cultural identity dependent on African history and culture. He encouraged a psychological and physical return to Africa while Du Bois sought something closer to assimilation into white American culture. As a result, in the end the two did not see eye to eye. Their endorsers also reflected the philosophical difference between Du Bois and Garvey; while Du Bois held sway over the African American upper class, Garvey found his supporters among the African American working class.

Both Garvey's and Du Bois' writings are equally important in understanding the nature of the artistic products created during the Harlem Renaissance. As Floyd states, "African Americans were inspired by a growing awareness of the African civilizations that had once flourished along the Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates rivers. They longed to restore African culture to a position of respect, and they used what they knew of African and African-American folk art and literature of times past and current in an attempt to create new cultural forms."¹⁹³ The Harlem Renaissance was not so much concerned with emulating a romanticized foreign culture. It was a rebirth of African American heritage. African Americans wished to embrace and express a part of themselves that they had been forced to repress for so long. However, these valuable cultural traits of Africa were at the time considered inferior to the European cultural traits that

¹⁹³ Floyd, Jr., *The Power of Black Music*, 106

dominated America. The Harlem Renaissance marked a re-emergence of this lost cultural heritage and is reflected in the artistic rendering of this time period.

The Harlem Renaissance was also responsible for spurring the development of other African heritage cultural movements including the literary and political movement known as the Négritude movement. This movement was developed by a group of students living in Paris including Léopold Sédar Senghor from Senegal, Martiniquan poet Aimé Césaire, and the Guianan Léon Damas. Césaire first used the term Négritude in an article in the group's journal, *L'Étudiant Noir* in the 1940s. It soon came to symbolize the solidarity of an African identity that French African intellectuals used as a way to counteract French colonial racism. As a result, concepts associated with the Négritude movement, like Pan-African concepts, placed a deep emphasis on the celebration and uniqueness of sub-Saharan African culture and traditions. Lateef states that he was inspired by Garvey's "Back to Africa movement" and "by many African connections around the world" though he could not remember reading any writings on the Négritude movement in the 1940s.¹⁹⁴ Weston saw the Négritude movement as an extension of Garvey's concept of Pan-Africanism, he states, "all those concepts are related, and they taught me to look to the spirit of Africa, and to seek out my cultural heritage."¹⁹⁵ Later Paris would become one of three important bases for Weston who split his time between Morocco, Paris and New York in the late sixties and early seventies.¹⁹⁶

Later in the 1940s and 50s African writers began to view Négritude negatively, judging it to be a philosophy that encouraged the alienation of cultures based on race, which in turn added to the divisions found in French colonial Africa and the Caribbean. Many scholars acknowledge

¹⁹⁴ Lateef, interview by Squinobal

¹⁹⁵ Weston, interview by Squinobal

¹⁹⁶ Ibid

that although Négritude stressed racial differences, it was nonetheless a significant precursor to decolonization. Like Pan-African concepts during the Harlem Renaissance movement, “the Négritude movement of the 1930s and ‘40s did much to discredit such foolishness and to force Eurocentric elites to acknowledge and accept African heritage in their national cultures.”¹⁹⁷ The Négritude literary movement was just one of many Pan-African movements inspired by the activities of proponents of the Harlem Renaissance movement.

5.1 MUSIC OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

The American perception of Africa and African cultural traits at the time of the Harlem Renaissance was of central importance to the artistic products created during this period of time. During the 1920s and 30s in America and throughout the Western world, Africa was portrayed as a primitive and savage land, filled with untamed tribal people who were stuck in the ancient past. In the eyes of the West, Africa was a link to the primitive past and existed much lower on the evolutionary scale than Western civilization. Western scholars fabricated this view of Africa as they sought to understand their own beginnings. They viewed modern foraging societies in Africa as a depiction of primitive life in Europe and they perceived these societies to be devoid of history, having remained stagnant for centuries. The perception of a primitive and savage Africa was strong and it permeated America during the Harlem Renaissance.

It is evident by the scholarship of the time that there was substantial ignorance of African cultural activities. In many cases, scholars misinterpreted traditional African musical techniques.

¹⁹⁷ Manuel, *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music From Rumba to Reggae*, 16

They deemed many fundamental African musical techniques to have European origins, and by doing so they show a Eurocentric persuasion in their research. Herskovits gives examples of scholars who attempted to find African traditional material in African American folk music. Herskovits critiques a study done by Hornbostel, in which Hornbostel states that “the outstanding aspects of [African American] spirituals are European, such characteristics as the pentatonic scale, ‘Scotch Snap,’ and a tendency to harmonize in thirds all being well known traits of white folk music.”¹⁹⁸ In fact, Hornbostel identifies only one feature of African derivation, that being call-and-response. This type of thought and scholarship typifies the lack of insight about African traditional musical materials in use in the United States at the time. For although the musical techniques mentioned in Hornbostel’s research may have been found in Europe, they were also present in African traditional music well before Europeans had contact with West Africa. It was the collective opinion of the West that African music consisted of tribal drums and jungle noises and of little else. However, many of the musical techniques assumed by Hornbostel and other scholars to be of European origin would eventually be recognized as African and would come to play an important role in the music of the Harlem Renaissance.

At the outset, the Harlem Renaissance movement began “primarily as a literary movement,” and music contributed only marginally.¹⁹⁹ However, as the movement progressed music soon became its defining factor. According to Floyd, the initial attempts of musicians during the Harlem Renaissance were to produce works of art that white Americans would respect for their excellence. It was the hope of Renaissance leaders such as Du Bois and James Weldon

¹⁹⁸ Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, 263

¹⁹⁹ Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., “Music in the Harlem Renaissance: An Overview,” in *Black Music in the Harlem Renaissance: a collection of Essays*. Ed. Floyd, Jr. (New York; London: Greenwood Press, 1990,) 3

Johnson to mold African Americans into people who would attend high society European classical music concerts and operas.²⁰⁰ Composers began producing music in the mold of Western art music with the hope that this would raise the status of African Americans in the eyes of Anglo Americans by demonstrating intellectual equality of African Americans through the production of musical works, along with other forms of art and literature.²⁰¹ From these efforts came works in extended musical forms such as symphonies and operas. At the same time, these works began using raw materials from African American folk heritage such as spirituals, in an attempt to foster a sense of pride in African American folk material. The perception that African musical material was inferior to that of Western European music was part of the reason for the attempt to emulate the Western European style. At the same time, it should be noted, there was an increase in the use of European and Anglo American folk music into Western classical music by white classical composers, as nationalism surged throughout the arts.

Initially, popular African American music, such as blues and jazz, were ignored in favor of art music. Lewis states, that Du Bois and Johnson, among others “Banned ‘funky’ artists, blues and jazz artists that they felt were unworthy of appreciation.”²⁰² However the popularity of Broadway shows such as *Shuffle Along* (which helped to popularize the Charleston) compelled African American popular and folk music to become a driving force in the Renaissance movement.²⁰³ One of the reasons African American popular styles were disparaged was due to the misconception that jazz and the blues represented an aspect of African American culture that would not allow it to acclimate to Anglo American cultural aesthetics. For example, jazz was

²⁰⁰ Floyd, Jr., “Music in the Harlem Renaissance: An Overview,” 4

²⁰¹ Floyd, Jr., *The Power of Black Music*, 106.

²⁰² Lewis, *The Harlem Renaissance Reader*, xvi

²⁰³ *Ibid*, xvi

often associated with brothels in the early twentieth century, and the blues were often described as the ‘devil’s music.’ African scholar Fela Sowande succinctly characterizes this view of jazz by stating, “Jazz is essentially anti-religious and irresponsible; it blunts the finer sensibilities and is alien to the strongly ethical tradition of African music.”²⁰⁴ This statement made at a conference in the 1940s was an attempt by Sowande to distance West African traditional music from jazz. Here it provides a salient example of the position jazz and the blues held in the minds of many people during 1940s. In the end however, it was jazz and the blues that proved to be the most successful styles of music used by Renaissance musicians and these styles flourished during the Harlem Renaissance. It was perhaps because of the perception that jazz and the blues were taboo that white audiences were drawn to the music of Harlem.

The incorporation of jazz and dance band music began to draw white audiences into the uptown Harlem clubs. Before World War I, downtown white communities had ignored Harlem cultural activities. However, after the war downtown white New Yorkers began to take an interest in African American theater, music, and dance. In fact, white American interest and funding greatly aided the Harlem Renaissance. White audiences comprised the majority of audiences in the clubs of Harlem. As previously mentioned, the mob controlled Harlem clubs and catered to their white clientele, creating an atmosphere that appealed to them. White audiences came to Harlem to observe the ‘exotic entertainment’ that African Americans partook in every night.

They wanted to hear jungle music. According to Floyd, “Jazz and show entertainers were being viewed by whites as symbols of primitive indulgence... This stereotype was reinforced by the discovery of primitive African sculpture and the ascendancy of jazz in the Renaissance

²⁰⁴ Sowande, *African Music*, 342

years.”²⁰⁵ This desire to hear and experience exotic entertainment can again be attributed to the perception that Africa and Africans were exotic and savage people who partook in primal celebration that were nothing like the dignified and repressed white culture. Thus, a monetary incentive to produce renditions of African, jungle-themed music, encouraged this type of musical output by African American musicians and artists.

As a result, the view of a primitive African culture was incorporated and encouraged in the artistic works of musicians during the Harlem Renaissance. Primitive traits such as horn cries and jungle drums played central roles in African American club musical performances for white Americans. Not only was the music exotic but the clubs also featured beautiful African American women dressed provocatively as exotic jungle dancers. For white American audiences, this primitive jungle sound symbolized exotic and forbidden activities.

The perception of a foreign and unfamiliar Africa signified something different for African American artists and audiences who participated in the Harlem Renaissance. For African Americans, the idea of associating with African stereotypes represented a separation from the expected social behaviors of white Americans. It gave them a different identity to relate to, one that did not brand them as inferior because of their race. For too long African Americans had been subverted into the lower social caste and were unable to elevate themselves in white America’s social system. By rejecting white American cultural traits for their own African traditional cultural roots, they hoped to gain equality. Though it may have been considered primitive and savage, in the eyes of white America, it was their own identity and it set them apart and imparted them with pride and individuality.

²⁰⁵ Floyd, Jr., “Music in the Harlem Renaissance,” 4

6.0 CHAPTER 6: THE INFLUENCE OF DUKE ELLINGTON, AND HIS SIDEMEN

African American composers and musicians began to consciously use rhythm, percussion instruments, and unique timbres as a way of evoking images of Africa in their music. Some of these composers and musicians traveled and performed jazz around the country during the Harlem Renaissance movement and the most famous performers had the biggest influence on Weston, Blakey, and Lateef as children. Duke Ellington, a musician who exemplified the music of the Harlem Renaissance, most significantly influenced Weston. Ellington was also an important influence on Blakey, but it was Ellington's drummer Sonny Greer, along with Sid Catlett, and Chick Webb that inspired the fire within Blakey. Lateef had opportunities to hear Ellington when he performed in Detroit and always loved his saxophonists and was equally influenced by McKinney's Cotton Pickers.

Ellington's band was the house band for the Cotton Club, one of the most famous clubs in Harlem during the Renaissance period. The Cotton Club was renowned for its exotic jungle shows and Ellington was the headliner. Ellington's band became known as 'the jungle band' and many of his compositions used the word 'jungle' in the title, however these titles did not reflect Ellington's writings as much as it reflected the desire of white audiences to experience primal African music.²⁰⁶ Ellington was conscious of the use of timbre in his music and linked his manipulation of timbre with African aesthetics. In regards to catering to the expectations of

²⁰⁶ Haskins, *The Cotton Club*, 1977

white audiences Ellington stated, “As a student of Negro history I had, in any case, a natural inclination in this direction.”²⁰⁷

Edward Kennedy Ellington, born in 1899, grew up in urban Washington D.C. Ellington was raised in a middle-class D.C. neighborhood, and his comfortable social background afforded him the opportunity to experience a wide variety of African American music. He attended traveling vaudeville acts that performed regularly at the local Howard Theater. Ellington was also able to see performances by well-known African American pianists such as Eubie Blake, Lucky Roberts, and James P. Johnson as all three performed often in Washington D.C.²⁰⁸ The wide variety of musical performances Ellington experienced proved to be valuable to him as he matured into a professional musician. As he began composing for his own group he was able to draw upon his early childhood musical experiences and they added to his very personal style.

One of Ellington’s biggest critiques is that he was not a talented pianist.²⁰⁹ Regardless of the critic’s opinion of his technical skills, one cannot refute his prowess as a bandleader and composer. In fact, Ellington considered himself to be first and foremost a composer; it was his group as a whole, more than himself as an individual pianist that identified him. Ellington is of particular interest to this study because he played a major role in the development of jazz during the Renaissance Movement, and he was an important influence on Randy Weston and his use of African musical material.

Ellington relocated from Washington D.C. to New York City in 1923. After a short stint at the Kentucky Club, his band became the house band at the Cotton Club. At the Cotton Club,

²⁰⁷ Haskins, *The Cotton Club*, 1977

²⁰⁸ Alyn Shipton, *A New History of Jazz*, 261

²⁰⁹ According to Nathan Davis this is a popular, but inaccurate critique of Ellington’s playing ability, (personal communication, fall 2005).

Ellington's music was broadcast and showcased a variety of styles, from the 'sweet' dance music that was popular at the time, to the 'dirty and rough' syncopated numbers that white audiences stereotypically associated with 'primitive' African Americans.²¹⁰ The Cotton Club demanded a variety of musical styles to satisfy different crowds. This required Ellington to become a versatile composer and performer. As Alyn Shipton points out, "Ellington began to personify an image of jazz that combined his own considerable sophistication with the primitive rhythms and growling horns of the 'jungle'."²¹¹ Ellington became a musical chameleon in order to create an appeal for his varying audiences. To succeed at the Cotton Club he needed to be perceived as exotic and mysterious; however, to appeal to his broadcast audiences he needed to have a certain amount of sophistication. Shipton states:

Ellington's compositions were being performed for white audiences in the center of an African American district of New York. At the same time as Ellington's work was being packaged for that audience as 'jungle' music, helped along by Bubber Miley and Joe Nanton's growling brass and [Sonny] Greer's 'African' drumming, [his manager, Irving] Mills was presenting him to a wider public as a sophisticated composer...²¹²

Ellington's use of timbre and rhythm was unique because these techniques were a direct result of the talents of his band members. He chose his sidemen for their unique voices and individual styles and he composed with their individual strengths in mind. Their ability to produce interesting tonal inflections was key to Ellington's African inspired compositions. Floyd has commented on the effect of Ellington's use of interesting timbre combinations. He states, "The key to the power of the Ellington effect lies in its embodied sound, the visceral expressive effect that, in Ellington's amalgams, exudes and evokes, by way of the prodigious

²¹⁰ Shipton, *A New History of Jazz*, 266

²¹¹ *Ibid*, 267.

²¹² *Ibid*, 267.

semantic value of their sound, the callers, criers, and ‘story tellers’ of the African and African American past.”²¹³

Some critics have called Ellington’s interpretation of African music stereotypical and cliché. However, it must be remembered that Ellington had not visited Africa at the time of the Harlem Renaissance. His compositions may not have been accurate depictions of modern African music, but his works represented Africa to him and his listeners, most of who had also never been to Africa. A passage from Floyd’s essay, “Black Music in the Harlem Renaissance” describes the use of traditional African musical techniques and the paradox that it caused because of the negative perception Americans had of Africa at the time. He states:

By 1920 it was certainly clear that polymeter, multimeter, call-and-response patterns, certain pitch collections and inflections, and all of the sound devices and techniques of Afro-American music performance practices were common traits, to some degree, of all the music that had emanated from black culture in the United States, and that these traits defined this body of music as Afro-American... The elements that defined the music of the black folk communicated the very stereotypes and values that Renaissance leaders wanted to eradicate. In spite of such contradictions, Renaissance thinkers believed that the building of a culture required a foundation on which to build the new ideas and institutions. For this foundation, black thinkers and artists reached back to the artistic forms of the “old Negro” and his forbearers in Africa.²¹⁴

It can be seen from this extended passage that Renaissance leaders, the same leaders who wished to cultivate African American opera-goers, tried to dispel the primitive perceptions of Africa. However, at the same time it was these unique African traditional materials that gave African Americans an identity during the Renaissance movement and propelled the movement forward. Thus, the Harlem Renaissance existed as a paradox of itself, one side attempting to forge new paths, the other embracing and exploiting its so-called ‘primitive’ roots.

²¹³ Floyd, Jr., *The Power of Black Music*, 170

²¹⁴ Floyd, Jr., “Music in the Harlem Renaissance,” 6

It must be remembered that Ellington and other artists of the Harlem Renaissance had to work with the primitive and savage image that the rest of America had of Africa. These artists attempted to achieve dual goals. They were required to present a show that was exotic and entertaining for white audiences, yet they were also trying to forge a new African American identity. To Ellington and his African American audiences, his pieces function more as symbols of Africa and its cultural heritage than as accurate depictions of modern African music.

Weinstein has suggested that Ellington's use of 'jungle sounds' in his music is "the product of musicians reflecting Caribbean and African musical values."²¹⁵ Though sometimes thought of as comical or caricaturizing, Ellington's use of tonal effects does reflect a priority of timbre manipulation taking precedence over complex harmony, something perhaps influenced by African traditional music. During the Renaissance movement, many people were under the impression that African music consisted only of drums. Yet Ellington delved deeper and used the manipulation of timbres to signify a connection with Africa.

Drums were not altogether unimportant in the music of Ellington. In fact, he favored the drums very much and knew how important they were to his music. Weinstein elaborates by saying; "Ellington knew how to match that horn section's jungleistic glossolalic polyphony with polyrhythms galore...Duke's love of drums was manifested not only in his drum section, but also through his percussive piano attack. He played piano with a drummer's feel for the percussive possibilities of the keyboard."²¹⁶ Ellington's percussive use of the piano is a characteristic that has been noticed by a number of scholars, as Ken Rattenbury, among others,

²¹⁵ Weinstein, *A Night in Tunisia*, 42

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 42

has also indicated “Ellington’s touch is resoundingly percussive.”²¹⁷ Ellington’s percussive piano tendencies was also noticed by Weston who developed a percussive touch of his own on the piano.

6.1 ELLINGTON’S SIDEMEN

As previously mentioned, Ellington’s sidemen were vital to both the development of his composition style and also to the sound and identity of the band as a whole. His most important sidemen were highly individual performers, and also integral to the overall unity of the ensemble. During the Harlem Renaissance, Ellington’s most recognizable sidemen played an important role in developing the young leader’s compositional techniques. Shipton has very perceptively pointed out, “The majority of pieces he wrote, arranged, and recorded between 1929 and 1931 depend on his use of ‘personalized’ settings for his major players, Bubber Miley, Joe Nanton, Barney Bigard, and so on, in which their own solo voices are subsumed within the compositional framework, while simultaneously being essential to it.”²¹⁸ The vocal effects used by trumpeter Bubber Miley were an integral part of the Ellington band identity.

Bubber Miley, known for the growling vocal noises he made with his trumpet, joined Ellington’s band in 1924. Miley was a major influence on Ellington’s composition style and co-

²¹⁷ Ken Rattenbury, *Duke Ellington: Jazz Composer*, (London; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) 220

²¹⁸ Shipton, *A New History of Jazz*, 268

wrote some of Ellington's earliest pieces.²¹⁹ While discussing the use of unique timbres in the Ellington band, Gunther Schuller states, "Bubber Miley was largely responsible for the initial steps through his introduction of a rougher sound into the band." Schuller continues by stating that "it was Miley and Nanton who developed the band's famous "jungle" effects through their use of the growl and plunger mute."²²⁰ Miley's contribution to the band, while important in supplying the stereotyped sounds of Africa, also echoed back to African traditional music in a larger sense. His individual voice integrated with the rest of the band; together the many individual voices formed a singular collective group a similar occurrence exists in African traditional musical practices.

In many instances, distinct vocal and instrumental timbres are highly appreciated in African traditional musical performances. Drums, xylophones and horns are often affixed with rattles, mirliton, shakers, bells, vibrating cords, and other auxiliary noise-making materials with the intention of giving the primary instrument a distinctive voice when played. In fact, it is said that a xylophone is not ready to be played until it is fastened with the proper supplementary vibrating material. It is only then that the instrument is able to sound its true tone.²²¹ In this sense, the Ellington band incorporated the traditional African concept of sound. The individual musicians were encouraged to play with interesting and individual tones, and the musicians who possessed the most unique sounds became the most famous soloists of the band. At the same time, these musicians were the most invaluable to the sound of the band as a whole.

Ellington's sidemen were more than just musical contributors to the band, they were important contributors to the development of African American conceptual ideas and their

²¹⁹ Rattenbury, *Duke Ellington: Jazz Composer*, 1990

²²⁰ Schuller, *Early Jazz*, 326

²²¹ Personal communication with Kofi Gbolonyo, fall 2006

impact on Ellington most certainly spread to other artists as well. Another influential musician in Ellington's band during the Harlem Renaissance movement was Joe Nanton. Nanton was West Indian, and his African influences came via the African diaspora in the Caribbean. Ellington was very aware of the Caribbean influence on jazz in the early 1920s. In his autobiography, Ellington elaborates more on the impact of Nanton, "What he was actually doing was playing a very highly personalized form of his West Indian heritage. When a guy comes here from the West Indies and is asked to play some jazz, he plays what *he* thinks it is, or what comes from his applying himself to the idiom."²²² In another statement Ellington continues, "Tricky and his people were deep in the West Indian legacy and the Marcus Garvey movement. A whole strain of West Indian musicians came up who made contributions to the so-called jazz scene, and they were all virtually descended from the true African scene."²²³ Garvey was as important to Ellington and his musicians as he was to the larger artistic movement of the Harlem Renaissance.

6.2 ELLINGTON'S INFLUENCE ON WESTON

As stated earlier, Ellington was a particularly important influence on Weston, both musically and philosophically. Musically, Ellington's creative use of timbre, in his piano voicings and his band orchestration were emulated by Weston. Weston also credits Ellington for directly influencing

²²² Edward Kennedy Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1976,) 108-109

²²³ *Ibid*, 109

his use of African music. “Duke Ellington...did a lot of composition about Africa. [He] knew the connection; so it’s not something brand new, it was just something that got cut off. Without the influence of those before me, there wouldn’t have been any Randy Weston.”²²⁴ Ellington’s recording “The Drum is a Woman,” among others, was certainly influential to Weston’s own compositional techniques as will be examined later.

In the liner notes to his *Portraits of Duke Ellington* recording, Weston explains the debt and gratitude he owes to Ellington.²²⁵ He states:

I was trying to play funny things in between notes, trying to get sounds on the piano, but I hadn’t heard anybody do that yet until I heard Monk. Ellington had been doing it all the while—before Monk, before me, before any of us. Duke in the 20s was already doing this but he had his full orchestra and he was so creative that it was hard to catch up to Ellington. Duke wrote many songs about Africa and about African people. But, he also wrote about calypso, about the Caribbean. The worth of Duke, his music, and his most valuable appendage, his orchestra, to black or African musicians like myself, cannot be underestimated.²²⁶

Weston was inspired by Ellington’s music but they also shared many philosophical beliefs. Both musicians were greatly influenced by Garvey. In fact, Ellington went so far as to suggest that a large majority of musicians were influenced by Garvey’s work. In his autobiography Ellington states, “Bebop...is the Marcus Garvey extension.”²²⁷ Weston’s similarities to Ellington can also be seen in the fact that Weston, like Ellington, understood the concept of Pan-Africanism and that much of African America’s African heritage came via the Caribbean. The importance of this fact in regards to Weston will be examined in greater detail later on. However, it is clear that both Ellington and Weston shared a clear understanding of Pan-African concepts.

²²⁴ Musto, “African Rhythms” *All About Jazz*, February 2004

²²⁵ Randy Weston, *Portraits of Duke Ellington: Caravan*, Verve, 1990.

²²⁶ Randy Weston’s Website, <http://www.randyweston.info/randy-weston-welcome.html>, accessed 02/22/07

²²⁷ Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, 109

7.0 CHAPTER 7: HARLEM RENAISSANCE MUSIC IN PITTSBURGH AND DETROIT

While the Harlem Renaissance began in New York, it had a profound impact on African American urban areas throughout the United States. Variety shows would travel through Pittsburgh in the early 1930's. These traveling shows were modeled after the Harlem Cotton Club shows in which big bands would support different dancing and comedy acts. Often, these variety shows would perform in one of two different theaters, the Roosevelt Theater located in the Hill District and the Stanley Theater located downtown. Pittsburgh drummers Joe Harris, Kenny Clarke, and Art Blakey all learned how to play the drums by playing variety shows in these theaters. The Stanley Theater, located in the predominantly white downtown community, hosted the big name shows while the smaller name shows came to the Roosevelt. Harris compares the Roosevelt to the Apollo Theater in Harlem and the Stanley to downtown New York theaters like the Paramount and the Warner. This division between major production white neighborhood theaters and smaller theaters found in African American neighborhoods was not only found in New York but all over the country, as Harris states, "This is how it was all over America."²²⁸

Professional musician Scipio Spencer, who was born in Homestead, went to high school in the 1930s and would listen to local big bands that played around Pittsburgh at the time.

²²⁸ Harris, Interview by Maurice Levy, 1994

Spencer remembers that big bands were very popular in the 1930s and they would play all around Pittsburgh, including at the Savoy ballroom on Center Ave. At the Savoy both black and white bands performed, including the Sunset Royals and the Humphrey Brothers who were Spencer's two favorite bands. Spencer also had the opportunity to hear some of the great pianists of Pittsburgh in rent parties.²²⁹ Rent parties are best known in Harlem where people would hire pianists or small jazz groups to perform at parties in their home and charge admission in order to pay the rent. Some of the most popular and talented pianists of the time would perform at these rent parties. As we have seen with the Harlem Renaissance in general, rent parties were not limited to the apartment buildings of Harlem but could be found in all the major cities where African Americans were struggling to make the rent.

Local Pittsburgh tap dancer Clyde Edwards Broadus, who went to school with Billy Strayhorn and Kenny Clarke, remembers the Harlem Renaissance period in Pittsburgh well. When Broadus was a child he would go to the Stanley Theater and spend all day watching the stage shows and movies that would alternate on the weekends. At that time African Americans were only allowed to watch the shows from the third balcony.²³⁰ Broadus performed all over Pittsburgh as a tap dancer and he performed in many of the theaters in both the Hill District and downtown. He danced in many of the well-known Hill District clubs including the Hurricane, Crawford Grill, and the Ritz. Broadus recalls that he was tap dancing at the Stanley Theater when Duke Ellington met Strayhorn and hired him.

Musicians from traveling big bands would perform downtown, then go to the African American Musicians Union club to jam. Frank Bolden, who performed at the Harlem show bar

²²⁹ Scipio Spencer, Interview by Maurice Levy, (Tape recording, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Oral History of Music in Pittsburgh Collection, May 18 1995)

²³⁰ Broadus, Interview by Maurice Levy, 1997

in the Hill District, remembers Ellington stopping in Pittsburgh to play one-night engagements on the way to Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio.²³¹ The African American musicians' club, where musicians would gather and host jam sessions provided an important informal venue for musicians traveling through Pittsburgh to perform with and interact with local African American musicians. Ellington's sidemen would visit the club after the night's performance. The African American musicians' club was located in the Hill District. Harris states, "The Hill District was the Mecca of the entertainment industry in Pittsburgh."²³² Often the traveling musicians would be invited to play at these jam sessions and occasionally even white musicians were invited to jam at the club, provided they could keep up with the African American musicians. Walter Worthington testifies to this fact as he recalls that traveling white musicians would occasionally show up at the club after their gigs downtown to learn how to play jazz.²³³

While it was relatively rare for white musicians to perform at the predominantly African American clubs, it was more common to find white audience members enjoying the music. Bolden suggests that white audience members were quite welcome up in the Hill District. He remembers white and African American audience members intermingling in Hill District clubs. Often during the 1920s and 30s there were more white audience members than African Americans in the Hill District clubs similar to the situation at the Cotton Club in Harlem. In contrast, African Americans could not socialize with white audience members at the downtown clubs like the Stanley Theater. Bolden emphasizes that "the social interaction was great" in the African American communities but not so in the white communities of Pittsburgh. Monson identifies this situation as a common occurrence in urbanized areas throughout the United States.

²³¹ Bolden, Interview by Maurice Levy, 1993

²³² Harris, Interview by Maurice Levy, 1994

²³³ Worthington, Interview by Maurice Levy, 1993

She states, “It was not uncommon in early jazz for white musicians to play with black performers in black venues; controversy ensued primarily when mixing occurred in prestigious white venues.”²³⁴ Bolden attributes the racial and social tolerance within the African American Pittsburgh communities to the presence of the African American Musicians Union which held very high standards of its members and helped uphold the social areas of the African American communities.²³⁵

In the first half of the twentieth century white and African American musicians each had their own musicians unions. Pianist Carl Arter, who was good friends with Kenny Clarke, served as the president of the local 471 black musicians union for ten years. He states that every Wednesday night there would be what he called “celebrity night” jam sessions at the musicians club where famous musicians who were in town would come and jam. At its largest, the number of members in the Local 471 was a little greater than 300 in the 1950s. The competition between the two unions before the merger was very fierce. The local 60 would bribe club owners not to hire African American musicians, and the union reprimanded any white musicians who were caught playing with African Americans.²³⁶ The two unions eventually merged in 1965.

The radio also played an important role in spreading the music of the Harlem Renaissance to other urban areas. Some of the first radio broadcasts of jazz to Pittsburgh were from the Cotton Club in New York, where first Cab Calloway and later Duke Ellington’s orchestras performed nightly.²³⁷ The first commercial radio stations broadcasted live jazz performances in the early 1920s. Two of the earliest stations were KDKA in Pittsburgh and

²³⁴ Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 33

²³⁵ Bolden, Interview by Maurice Levy, 1993

²³⁶ Carl Arter, Interview by Maurice Levy, (Tape recording, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Oral History of Music in Pittsburgh Collection, July 11 1994)

²³⁷ Worthington, Interview by Maurice Levy, 1993

WWJ in Detroit. In the early stage of broadcasting, all broadcasts were on medium or long-wave frequencies, which allowed them to be heard for hundreds of miles on clear fair weather nights. Ellington's manager, Irving Mills, saw to it that Ellington's Cotton Club shows were broadcast nightly and this more than anything else assured national success for Ellington.

It should be made clear that although African American bands like Calloway's, Ellington's, Count Basie's, and Louis Armstrong did get radio air play their national exposure was not nearly as broad as that of major white bands such as Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey, who were played over the airwaves during prime time. In contrast, Ellington's broadcasts were generally very late at night. KDKA in Pittsburgh would broadcast these late night performances and many young, aspiring jazz musicians were greatly influenced by the musicians they heard. As another example of racial discrimination, white bands had the luxury of playing a major venue for a week at a time. African American bands like Ellington's were exhausted by their tours of never-ending one-nighters and the harsh treatment they received because of segregation that accompanied African American travel throughout the United States. As a product of these one-night shows, African American bands performed for a wide variety of audiences at many different places in a short period of time.

7.1 EARLY MUSICAL INFLUENCES OF ART BLAKEY

Like Weston, Blakey was also greatly influenced by Ellington and his orchestra. Sonny Greer, in particular was instrumental in spurring Blakey's interest in applying West African rhythms to the drum set. Growing up in Pittsburgh, Blakey had the opportunity to hear both local and traveling musicians perform in the Hill District. Blakey is a self-professed autodidactic; however, he does

seem to be significantly influenced by a few of the most popular drummers of his day. Wayne Enstice and Paul Rubin identify Big Sid Catlett, Chick Webb, and Kenny Clarke as Blakey's biggest influences. They state, "He never had a formal drum lesson but schooled himself by listening intently to his idols."²³⁸ According to Burt Koral, Ellington's Sonny Greer was also a factor in Blakey's development.²³⁹ Webb, Catlett, Greer and Clarke were all master big band drummers, and the influences of their work prepared Blakey to play with several important big swing bands in the 1940s, most importantly the Billy Eckstine Band.

Although not always identified as a direct influence of Blakey, Sonny Greer's work with the Ellington band at the Cotton Club did have an effect on the Pittsburgh drummer. Blakey listened to performances of the Ellington band live at local theaters, and also in the nightly radio broadcasts produced during Ellington's residency at the Cotton Club in Harlem. During the time Ellington spent at the Cotton Club, Sonny Greer supplied the rhythmic foundation and 'exotic jungle' rhythms for the band. J. Bradford Robinson writes, "The exotic effects that Greer produced from the vast array of percussion equipment...added greatly to the 'jungle' sounds which Ellington devised for the club's shows, and are prominently featured in many of his early arrangements."²⁴⁰ Even on his earliest recordings as a leader Blakey shows a penchant for employing his bass drum and tom-toms in a way that evokes African inspired music. Although Blakey himself might not credit Greer as an influence, the connection is strong.

Blakey does identify some important drummers of the early twentieth century as having influenced his musical style. He states:

²³⁸ Wayne Enstice, and Paul Rubin. *Jazz Spoken Here: Conversations With Twenty-two Musicians*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992) 17

²³⁹ Burt Koral, *Drummin' Men: The Heartbeat of Jazz: the Bebop Years*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) 130

²⁴⁰ Bradford Robinson, "Sonny Greer" *New Grove Online*, www.newgrove.com

I heard and I watched Chick Webb, and I tried to take the beat of him and Big Sid Catlett. I tried to take the beat of these cats and try to incorporate it in what I was trying to do. And the most advanced of all the drummers at the time was a little young guy called Kenny Clarke. Fantastic drummer! He came back to Pittsburgh, and I just admired him. He sounded different from any other drummer.²⁴¹

Chick Webb led a very popular group at the Savoy Ballroom around 1927. His drumming style was particularly forceful despite his meager size and physical limitations due to tuberculosis. Unlike other swing era drummers who relied upon the woodblock and cowbell to set the tempo, Webb used them sparingly for effects. Webb was also well known for his use of interspersed rim shots, temple blocks, and cymbal crashes all for dynamic accentuation. He was one for the first drummers to abandon customary early jazz timekeeping techniques for “varied mixtures of dupe-and triple-meter patterns.”²⁴²

Sidney (Big Sid) Catlett, a member of McKinney’s Cotton Pickers, was known for his bright firm touch and absolute metrical precision in his right-hand ride patterns, which allowed him to create unpredictable cross-accents with the left, including his expertly timed rim-shots. He generated enormous intensity and imparted a sense of melody to his drum solos. From both of these soloists, Blakey acquired the ability to play with a firm, consistent beat while using his left hand and right foot to create polyrhythmic cross-rhythms.

Like many musicians from Pittsburgh, Blakey chose a life in music as a way to escape the poverty and hard work that waited him in the Pittsburgh steel mills. This was a choice made by many African American jazz musicians in the early twentieth century. As Davis states, jazz musicians “were often the product of urban ghettos, having suffered a life of degradation and

²⁴¹ Enstice, Wayne and Paul Rubin. *Jazz Spoken Here: Conversations With Twenty-two Musicians*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.) 22

²⁴² Bradford Robinson, “Chick Webb,” *New Grove Online*, www.newgrove.com

humiliation; jazz was considered the music of the outcast. Yet it was one of the few vehicles of upward mobility for young African Americans whose careers were blocked by racism. Through their art they could escape the ghettos.”²⁴³ Kenny Clarke was perhaps Blakey’s biggest musical influence. They both were born raised in Pittsburgh in the same sort of economic and psychologically depressing circumstances. In fact they had many life and musical experiences in common.²⁴⁴ Due to the strong influence Clarke had on Weston, Blakey, Lateef, and on bebop in general, an in-depth analysis of his influence is found below, in the section devoted to bebop.

7.2 DETROIT AND MCKINNEY’S COTTON PICKERS

Detroit owes much of its early development of jazz to the migration of African Americans from the rural south. They brought with them a certain aesthetic of jazz that was played in territory bands; this style was a mixture of early jazz, swing, and blues. Out of this grew a Detroit style of jazz that was hard driving and influenced by the blues. The majority of theaters in Detroit were owned and managed by white entrepreneurs who employed African American musicians to entertain white audiences. One of the most important entertainment managers was Jean Goldkette, who booked and managed entertainment groups at the Greystone and Akadia ballrooms, among others. He was instrumental in bringing important musical acts to Detroit during the 1920s and 30s; one such group was McKinney’s Cotton Pickers.

William McKinney and his band, initially named the Syncos and later renamed the Cotton Pickers, was one of the biggest musical influences on Detroit musicians during the

²⁴³ Davis, *African American Music*, 137

²⁴⁴ Korall, *Drummin’ Men*, 130

Harlem Renaissance. McKinney was born in 1895 in Kentucky. After a stint in the army he moved to western Ohio where he performed with variety shows that included comedic acts, dancing, and singing. The variety format became vital to McKinney success, and he continued to include variety elements in his Detroit performances in a manner that echoed the variety shows of the Harlem Renaissance. As the band grew and improved, McKinney found that his skills as a drummer were not up to the quality of the band; he hired Catlett to take over the drums so that he could focus more on the management and conducting of the band. Although the band received much less recognition than other bands of the era, musicians like trombonist Claude Jones, who performed with Ellington, Calloway, Fletcher Henderson and McKinney claimed that the McKinney group was the best band he ever played with. Don Redman was the musical director of the McKinney during its most revered musical era. Redman rehearsed the band, wrote their original arrangements, and was responsible for the overall sound of the group.

McKinney and his group first came to Detroit at the behest of entertainment mogul Goldkette, who was building an entertainment empire in Detroit to rival Irving Mills, Duke Ellington's manager in New York. Goldkette, first booked McKinney and his Syncos at the Arcadia for five months before moving the group to Goldkette's biggest venue, the Graystone Ballroom. Under Goldkette's management his ballrooms were for white audiences only up until the time McKinney and his band began playing the Greystone. Like Ellington, who was broadcast from the Cotton Club in Harlem, McKinney's Cotton Pickers were broadcast from the Greystone Ballroom in Detroit.

The new African American audiences received McKinney's group with overwhelming support. According to historian Lars Bjorn, "Racial segregation pervaded Detroit dancing establishments in the '20s, although the Graystone and the Arcadia were the least discriminatory

of the city's major ballrooms.”²⁴⁵ At both ballrooms African American audiences were allowed to attend on Monday nights, while the rest of the week was restricted for white patrons. The segregated environment of the Detroit ballrooms meant that the major African American big bands performed in much the same manner as in Harlem, tailoring their music to the tastes of their white audiences.

By the late twenties and early thirties, the Harlem style entertainment format of the Cotton Club was becoming popular in Detroit and became known as Black and Tans. This entertainment trend prompted a change in the name of McKinney's band from the Synops to the Cotton Pickers. This change corresponded with other name changes for different clubs around Detroit including the, Palms, Club Plantation, and the Chocolate Bar.²⁴⁶ During the 1930s the most important change in the Detroit jazz community was the gradual shift from big ballrooms to small cabaret bands.

The change in the size of jazz venues and source of employment reflected the growth of the black-and-tan cabaret and the emergence of Paradise Valley as the major entertainment spot in Detroit. The Valley was located within the African American community on the city's East Side around the intersection of St. Antoine and Adams.²⁴⁷ By the middle of the 1930s the cabarets in Paradise Valley provided most of the jobs for Detroit's African American jazzmen. Bjorn States “These jobs required musicians who were skilled readers well versed in a number of musical idioms, that is, the skills typically required of big band players.”²⁴⁸ The most exclusive cabarets were the black-and-tans. The Plantation, later Club Plantation at 550 East Adams, was

²⁴⁵ Bjorn, “Detroit Music History” <http://www.ipl.org/div/detjazz/Reading.html>

²⁴⁶ Fred J. Mayer “The Jazz Process: Brass Bands to Swing Bands—Music in Detroit, 1850-1930” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1994) 59

²⁴⁷ Bjorn, “Detroit Music History,” <http://www.ipl.org/div/detjazz/Reading.html>

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*

the most prominent of the black-and-tans during the 1930s. These clubs catered mainly to audiences of disproportionately upper-middle class backgrounds.²⁴⁹

In 1939 the Detroit Orchestra left Orchestra Hall and it became known as the Paradise Theater. The Paradise became an important venue for African American musicians to play for African American audiences. By this time the Paradise was the most well known entertainment spot in the city and became influential to Detroit's music history primarily in two ways. First, while other clubs in the area hosted live music exclusively, Paradise presented comedy acts, vaudeville shows and other traveling talent shows. Secondly, with the influx of traveling musicians brought into the city to perform at the Paradise, Detroit's music scene began to expand and develop, most notably in the style of bebop.²⁵⁰

In his account of the Harlem Renaissance period in Detroit Boyd states, "In many ways Black Detroit can be compared to Black New York... Though there were far less professional musicians in Detroit than in New York, their conditions were the same."²⁵¹ It is important to understand that African Americans living in urban areas throughout the North were having the same experiences, both good and bad, that African Americans in Harlem had. For example, many of the most popular bands from New York were touring the United States at the time and local musicians from other areas exchanged ideas with these musicians in such a way that both sides prospered. At the same time, many of the major theaters throughout the United States were white only or segregated establishments, so that African Americans were forced to see the major traveling shows after hours or in lesser theaters. "The McKinney group is really the last we can call a Detroit band. Even during their heyday New York was fast becoming the only place from

²⁴⁹ Bjorn, "Detroit Music History," <http://www.ipl.org/div/detjazz/Reading.html>

²⁵⁰ *Ibid*

²⁵¹ Herb Boyd, "Early Detroit Music History," <http://www.ipl.org/div/detjazz/Reading.html>

which a group could maintain a national profile,”²⁵² states Mayer. By the end of the 1940s musicians began congregating in New York City and the major developments that led to the bebop era began to develop in New York. However, many of the influential musicians of the bebop era were not born in New York but in other areas around the United States, including Pittsburgh and Detroit, and it was not until after these musicians had become accomplished musicians that they moved to New York.

7.3 LATEEF’S EARLY MUSICAL INFLUENCES

Lateef grew up in Detroit while McKinney’s Cotton Pickers were at the height of their popularity and he was most definitely influenced by the band, by Don Redman’s arrangements, and the performance style of McKinney’s band under Redman’s direction.²⁵³ However, being an aspiring tenor saxophonist Lateef’s biggest musical influences of the time were other tenor saxophonists, most notably Lester Young.

The two most influential tenor saxophonists of the 1920s and 30s were Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young; however, Jones asserts that Young was the more innovative of the two. “Tenor Saxophonist Lester Young brought this kind of riff-solo relationship to its most profound form. He was also the first saxophonist to develop the saxophone as an autonomous instrument capable of making its own characteristic music.”²⁵⁴ Hawkins had gained great recognition before

²⁵² Mayer “The Jazz Process: Brass Bands to Swing Bands,” 1994

²⁵³ Lateef, interview with the Jason Squinobal, 2007

²⁵⁴ Jones, *Blues People*, 183

Young; however, according to Jones, “Hawkins saxophone work, as impressive as it was, was really just an extension of the [Louis] Armstrong style to another instrument.”²⁵⁵

Referring to Young, Lateef states, “I recognized the kind of person he was long before I met him in person...I could hear his character or personality in his message.”²⁵⁶ Lateef first heard Young perform on the popular recordings he made with the Count Basie Orchestra and would try to emulate his sound and phrasing by playing along with Young on these recordings.²⁵⁷ Young’s sound, a unique and personal voice that instantly identified him as a soloist, intrigued Lateef the most. “It seems that early on in life he found his musical voice, which remained with him throughout his life,” states Lateef. “The point I’m trying to make here is that the pathos—the way he caused you to feel when you listen to his music was the way he really was—if you felt joy—he felt joy—if you felt sadness—he felt sadness. In other words, his musical voice could never be divorced from his character.”²⁵⁸ Young’s ability to manipulate the timbre of his tone by utilizing false fingerings or overtone fingerings is one of the unique techniques that Lateef emulated. Lateef explains the importance of this technique in his own assessment, “By applying innovative fingerings, [Young] produced a new genre of sound textures.” Lateef continues by equating Young’s timbral manipulation to word identification in African tonal languages. “As a tone language uses changes in pitch to indicate differences in the meanings of words—Lester used changes of texture, pitch, and nuance, tempered by his immaterial self, to indicate differences in feelings or to put the audience into a certain frame of mind.”²⁵⁹ Lateef also utilized these same techniques in his own saxophone solos and they provide an excellent

²⁵⁵ Jones, *Blues People*, 183

²⁵⁶ Yusef A. Lateef “The Pleasures of Voice in Autophysiopsychic Music” Unpublished Article

²⁵⁷ Lateef, Personal Communication

²⁵⁸ Lateef, “The Pleasures of Voice in Autophysiopsychic Music,”

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*

example of the priority given to timbral manipulation that is synonymous with importance placed on timbral manipulation in West African traditional music.²⁶⁰

Lester Young not only influenced Lateef, but a whole generation of young musicians who had tired of the constraints and lack of individuality of the large swing band format that had become popular during the Harlem Renaissance. Ross Russell explains:

Lester's insistence on the rhythmic priorities of jazz came as a tonic to a music, which was drifting away from the drive of early New Orleans music. Lester did more than reaffirm these priorities. He replenished the stream polluted by arrangers and thus made possible the even more complex rhythmic developments of the bebop style.²⁶¹

Blakey, Lateef, and Weston all began to study their instruments seriously towards the end of the Harlem Renaissance. This was a time when younger musicians began to react against the Anglo American appropriation of African American music. This reaction led to the development of bebop over the next decade, primarily in uptown Harlem clubs. Musicians such as Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, and Kenny Clarke are among the most notable musicians of this time period.

²⁶⁰ Lateef's use of timbral manipulation is examined more thoroughly in the musical analysis section of my dissertation.

²⁶¹ Ross Russell, "The Parent Style and Lester Young," in *(The Art of Jazz: Essays on the Nature and Development of Jazz)*, Ed. Martin T. Williams, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959) 210

8.0 CHAPTER 8: THE BEBOP REACTION

Toward the beginning of the 1940s the swing music made popular during the Harlem Renaissance no longer had the same cultural significance to African American musicians. Jones states, “by the forties [swing] had submerged all the most impressive acquisitions from African American musical tradition beneath a mass of popular commercialism.”²⁶² The big band format, so popular during the Renaissance movement, was identified as “incapable of serving as a vehicle for any serious musical expression.”²⁶³ The sense of communal expression had completely vanished and “individual expression within this framework was also impossible.”²⁶⁴ As a result, young musicians of the bebop era chose the small band formation over the big band ensembles of the Renaissance.

The start of the bebop era was actually a continuation of the Harlem Renaissance movement. In the spirit of the Renaissance movement, African American artists and musicians continued to develop identifiable cultural traits that were rooted in Africa, and were distinctly African American in nature. However the 1940’s marked a change in the attitude of many of the young jazz musicians who were breaking onto the scene in New York. Young jazz musicians began to think of themselves as “*serious* musicians, even artists, and not performers... Musicians

²⁶² Jones, *Blues People*, 181

²⁶³ *Ibid*, 184

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 184

like Charlie Parkers, Thelonious Monk, and Dizzy Gillespie were all quoted at various times saying ‘I don’t care if you listen to my music or not.’²⁶⁵

In the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* James Lincoln Collier writes:

A new militant spirit began to be felt by African-Americans, particularly jazz musicians, who by 1940 were hearing from critics that they were artists worthy of respect; they also realized that white players in big bands usually commanded higher salaries than they could, for playing what African-Americans were beginning to conceive of as their music. Furthermore, African-American musicians constantly suffered the indignity of having their families and friends refused entry into white clubs and dance halls where they were playing. Many became bitter as well as militant.

These attitudes had two effects on African-American jazz musicians. The first was the development of a strong distaste for the show-business antics of Fats Waller, Cab Calloway, and Armstrong, whose routines suggested the stereotype of the grinning, carefree African-American with a natural gift for song and dance: Armstrong in particular was castigated on this account. The second was their turning away from the seemingly impenetrable white culture in favor of African-American culture, which was at least their own, and would welcome them; musically, this meant a turning away from the swing style of the big bands, whose very popularity among whites made it suspect.²⁶⁶

This extended passage is important in understanding the attitudes of younger musicians and subsequently the direction modern jazz was taking. It was no longer a priority for musicians to present themselves and their music in parody for white audiences. Bebop musicians began to despise the popularity of big band jazz. In reaction, they sought out both elements of modernism and the ancient by embracing and utilizing elements of Western classical music and traditional musics of Africa and Asia. As a result, Jones states “beboppers showed up to restore jazz, in some sense, to its original separateness, to drag it outside the mainstream of American culture again.”²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ Jones, *Blues People*, 188

²⁶⁶ James Lincoln Collier, “Bop: The Climate for Change,” *New Grove Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 17, February 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

²⁶⁷ Jones, *Blues People*, 181

The focus of bebop musicians changed from performing accessible entertaining music to developing a style of music less accessible and more challenging for both audiences and musicians alike. In fact, the development of bebop also marked a change in the perception of African traditional cultural traits as well. It is at this point that many African American artists no longer accepted the notion of a primitive and savage Africa. It will be seen below that this new perception had a great effect on the musicians of the following generations including Blakey, Lateef, and Weston.

The major figures credited with the development of modern jazz are Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. Both are recognized as individuals who together sculpted modern jazz, and their collaborative work shows that they were two of the most progressive musicians of their day. Although these musicians did have a great impact on bebop and subsequently modern jazz, the development of the bebop was the work of many musicians, some better known than others. One of the most creative innovators of the bebop era was Thelonious Monk.

8.1 THELONIOUS MONK

As teenagers Blakey, Weston, and Lateef built upon their childhood influences. Thelonious Monk was an important influence on all of them. Blakey credits Thelonious Monk with helping to establish his reputation in New York. He states “Monk is largely responsible for me. When I got to New York, Monk would take Bud Powell and me around to all the places where the cats were jamming, and at that time they had cliques in New York.”²⁶⁸ Monk would make sure that

²⁶⁸ Enstice and Rubin, *Jazz Spoken Here*, 30

Powell and Blakey were able to sit in and play at the jam sessions despite the resistance to outsiders. Blakey and Monk also had a strong musical bond. They created fantastic music together and made one recording despite the insistence of Monk's manager that he not record with Blakey.

Though Lateef does not elaborate on the relationship he had with Monk he does state, "Monk was a great inspiration to me. I remember one night we were coming from the Jazz Showcase in New York and Monk was among the people. We were discussing how you play a G-minor 7th to C7 so I asked Monk. He said 'Yusef you just play Ideas.' In Monk's music you hear very provocative harmonies, and I was encouraged to seek some harmonies of my own..."²⁶⁹ Lateef's statement shows the important role Monk played as mentor to him and other young musicians.

Monk influenced Weston more than he influenced Blakey and Lateef and it is through Weston's experiences with Monk that we see the extent of his stature in the bebop community as both a mentor and artistic inspiration. Weston had childhood friends who took him to hear African music being performed in Brooklyn. This exposure led him to the music of Thelonious Monk. Monk became a mentor to Weston. Although Monk did not consciously use African material in his music, Weston felt that Monk had an unconscious spiritual connection to Africa.

Thelonious Monk was born in Rocky Mount, North Carolina on October 10 1917, and moved with his family to the African American community of San Juan Hill in New York City when he was a young boy. It is clear by listening to Monk's solo performances that he was greatly influenced by many of the famous stride pianists of his childhood. It is no surprise that many of these pianists lived and worked close to where Monk grew up. In his late teens, as he

²⁶⁹ Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 150

became more competent at the piano, Monk went on the road with a traveling evangelist. This experience was vital to his distinctly individual style and specifically to the development of his concept of rhythm. Monk's rhythmic concept developed from his use of a steady rhythmic foundation created for the traveling evangelist. "Monk frequently told journalists, he valued the experience of playing for the evangelist," states Leslie Gourse. "Undoubtedly the benefit lay, in large part, in the steadiness of the rhythms and the groove, the way the rhythms connected."²⁷⁰ The steady rhythmic concept that Monk developed in these formative years gave him a freedom to develop other musical traits, including unique chord voicings and a comping style that was equally distinct. Furthermore, his strong sense of rhythm made him a favorite pianist of bebop drummer Kenny Clarke; together Clarke and Monk propelled the development of bebop ever forward.

According to Thomas Owens, "Although bop was solidly grounded in earlier jazz styles (New Orleans jazz and swing), it represented a marked increase in complexity, and was considered revolutionary at the time of its development. Perhaps its most significant characteristic was the highly diversified texture created by the rhythm section—a considerable contrast to the insistent four-beat approach that was taken by swing musicians."²⁷¹ Monk's performance techniques exemplified this development of diversified texture on the piano. His work with Kenny Clarke at Minton's Playhouse was vital to the development of jazz. Monk became the house pianist at Minton's Playhouse in 1941. It was during the many nights of playing accompaniment for young bop soloists that Monk "developed a very unusual...melodic

²⁷⁰ Leslie Gourse, *Straight, No Chaser: the Life and Genius of Thelonious Monk*, (New York; Schirmer Books, 1997) 10

²⁷¹ Thomas Owens, "Bop" *New Grove Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 12, March 2007) <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

style...with surprising harmonies, angular, pointed chords, and twists and turns, stops and starts, and unusual rhythmic play and elasticity,” states Gourse.²⁷²

Though Monk was influential in the development of the bebop tradition, not everyone appreciated his distinctive piano style. In fact, before he began playing regularly at the Half Note jazz club, he had very few supporters. Ran Blake and Barry Kernfeld identify some of the reasons he was not appreciated by many of his fellow musicians; “He did not always exhibit the customary right-hand dexterity of most jazz pianists and, more importantly, his fellow jazz musicians quite often disagreed with his choice of notes. But his style, based on the Harlem stride tradition, had many strengths: a highly distinctive timbre, a capacity to provide uncanny rhythmic surprises, and a wide variety of articulation.”²⁷³

These aspects of Monk’s playing are very similar to Ellington’s playing and composition style. Monk’s music is also saturated with blues influence like Ellington.²⁷⁴ Monk and Duke share a kinship in their music.²⁷⁵ This becomes apparent with “a close examination of Ellington’s music that reveals...a direct link to the piano style of Thelonious Monk.”²⁷⁶ According to Nathan Davis, both Ellington and Monk were incorrectly thought to have poor or limited technique on the piano.²⁷⁷ In fact, both men were excellent pianists who chose not to perform needless displays of technical proficiency. They performed like composers, only adding what was necessary to their music.

²⁷² Gourse, *Straight, No Chaser*, 20

²⁷³ Ran Blake and Barry Kernfeld, “Thelonious Monk,” *New Grove Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 12, March 2007) <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

²⁷⁴ Davis, *African American Music*, 70

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 74

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 26

²⁷⁷ Davis, *African American Music*, 25

While Ellington was socially conscious, composing music to reflect his feelings about African and African American issues, in general, it appears that Monk was not concerned with things of that nature. “I’m not in power,” states Monk. “I’m not worrying about politics...Let the statesmen do that—that’s their job.”²⁷⁸ Monk also appears to be unconcerned with racial issues and has stated on the topic, “I hardly know anything about it. I never was interested in those Muslims. If you want to know, you should ask Art Blakey. I don’t have to change my name—it’s always been weird enough! I haven’t done one of those ‘freedom’ suites, and I don’t intend to. I mean I don’t see the point. I’m not thinking that race thing now, it’s not on my mind.”²⁷⁹ From Monk’s statements it would seem that he was completely absorbed in his music and had no regard for the cultural aspects of the time. However, according to people who knew Monk personally, the pianist did not always voice what he was thinking. Davis has suggested that at times Monk may even tell you the opposite of what he was thinking, “just to mess with you.”²⁸⁰ Certainly his experiences with New York police who revoked his cabaret card due to suspicions of drug use give evidence that he was indeed affected by racial problems.

Though he may not have voiced his concerns with politics, racial issues or civil rights, Monk’s music displayed a kind of unconscious link to African aesthetics. His choice of chord voicings produced unique timbres, and he performed in a natural polyrhythmic relationship with other accompanying instruments. His overall piano playing style is percussive and is akin to the way African musicians utilize their instruments, emphasizing the percussive attributes of all of

²⁷⁸ Valerie Wilmer, *Jazz People*, (New York; Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, inc. 1970) 48

²⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 48-49

²⁸⁰ Nathan Davis, personal communication, spring 2007

their instruments. These musical attributes are what sparked Weston's interest in Monk as a pianist.

Weston first heard Monk play in Coleman Hawkins's band. Monk and Hawkins may at first seem like a strange fit. However, although the older tenor man played in a traditional swing-era style that was no longer in vogue, he prided himself in hiring young modern musicians. "Monk was one of [Hawkins's] favorite young players" and he often defended Monk against his detractors, of which there were many.²⁸¹ Weston introduced himself to Monk and arranged to visit him at his apartment. During one visit to Monk's apartment, Weston states, "He played piano for almost three hours for me. Then I spent the next three years with Monk."²⁸² Though Monk hardly spoke during their get-togethers, Weston learned a great deal from the man. He continues, "Later I found out that Sufi mystics didn't speak through words. Ancient, wise people knew how to speak without words."²⁸³ Monk was a big influence on the development of Weston as a person and a musician. This is because Weston was an impressionable teenager when he met Monk and the revered jazz musician made himself available to Weston. Weston looked up to Monk. In an art form where originality is placed at a premium, Weston considered Monk the most original pianist he had ever heard.

Like many listeners, when Weston first heard Monk play with Hawkin's group Monk's unique style struck Weston as abrasive and unpolished. However, Weston's opinion changed after hearing him again. "The next time I heard him, I knew that was the direction I wanted to go in. That happened because Ahmed Abdul-Malik played with Monk, and he would take me to

²⁸¹ Gourse, *Straight, No Chaser*, 35

²⁸² *Ibid*, 77

²⁸³ *Ibid*, 77

Atlantic Avenue.”²⁸⁴ Weston states that “Monk was from another dimension...but most pianists in the 1940s didn’t like Monk. They said he couldn’t play. But I knew he was the most original pianist I ever heard.”²⁸⁵

Weston took advantage of growing up in the cultural Mecca that is New York City and spent every opportunity that he could seeking out live performances of traditional African music. Brooklyn was a particularly valuable community for him. This was one of Weston’s earliest exposures to African traditional music. Weston states, “I grew up in Brooklyn with the great bassist Ahmed Abdul-Malik, whose father was Sudanese. He also played the oud, and when we were kids he’d take me to Atlantic Avenue in downtown Brooklyn to hear musicians play the instruments of North Africa and the Middle East.”²⁸⁶

Weston heard these musicians play quartertones and notes in-between the Western half steps. He absorbed the music and attempted to apply it to the piano. While trying to capture the essence of the quartertones on the piano Weston realized that Monk had already accomplished this through his use of chord cluster voicings.²⁸⁷ He continues, “[Monk] was the most original I ever heard; he played like they must have played in Egypt 5,000 years ago. For me it was pure African piano.”²⁸⁸ Not only does this statement show Weston’s interpretation of Monk’s music, it also shows an underlying Pan-African theme of Weston’s thoughts that Africa consisted of the whole continent and not just West Africa. In the following chapters it will become clear that Weston’s concept of Pan-Africanism, like that of Ellington’s during the Harlem Renaissance had a significant influence on Weston’s work as a composer and musician.

²⁸⁴ Gourse, *Straight, No Chaser*, 77

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 79

²⁸⁶ Panken “African Soul,” 20

²⁸⁷ Weston Interview with the Jason Squinobal, 2007

²⁸⁸ Bouchard, “Randy Weston’s Pan-African Revival,” 21

So what attracted Weston to Monk and his music? It was Monk's rhythmic and timbre approach that spoke to Weston. In Monk's playing Weston heard a natural, unconscious African element. Weston was aware of the similarities between the piano styles of Ellington and Monk and those similarities further strengthened his appreciation for each musician. Though Monk did not openly display an interest in Africa or African traditional music, it is clear that the spirit of Africa was strong in Monk and Weston could sense this. In an interview with Leslie Gourse, Weston states:

I loved Monk personally because he was a master, but not in the Western sense. In the West, to be a master, all you have to do is play well, that's it. From my years with traditional Africans I learned that in the East, you have to be respected in your community. And in Monk's neighborhood, when we walked together, people acknowledged him. To be a master, you have to be clean of mind and spirit. And he was clean of mind and spirit. He did not speak it, didn't waste words; he lived it. In our tradition, our people didn't talk a lot. Monk was from that tradition... When he said something, it was powerful. It was different.²⁸⁹

According to Gourse, when Weston went to Egypt and studied African history and music, he came to realize that Monk was "like the reincarnation of the ancient spirit of Africa. Randy didn't hear any of Europe in Monk's music. He heard the way an African hears. He heard spiritualism and mysticism."²⁹⁰ Monk's influence on Weston became greater as Weston began to study African traditional music and culture leading into the 1960s. "After years in Africa I came to believe that God sent prophets to bring us beauty in life," says Weston. "Monk was that for me. He shared music with me...we shared and became inseparable."²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ Gourse, *Straight, No Chaser*, 80

²⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 79

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, 78

8.2 KENNY CLARKE

Kenny Clarke was a particularly influential force in the development of bebop in the 1940s. Like Monk, Clarke's significant contributions to the development of bebop are often overlooked in favor of the accomplishments of more popular musicians like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. However his contributions to bebop and more specifically the development of modern drum set technique cannot be overlooked as a primary influence on Art Blakey.

Kenny Clarke was born in Pittsburgh on January 2, 1914 under the name Kenneth Spearman. He changed his last name to Clarke shortly after he started performing. Clarke's father left the family and moved to Washington State when Kenny was just a baby. His mother died when he was between the age of 5 and 7.²⁹² However, while his mother was alive, she would play the piano for him and his older brother. The time she spent playing the piano for them would stay with Clarke the rest of his life. After the death of his mother, Clarke moved to the North Hills of Pittsburgh where he lived in a mixed community of Italian, Jewish, and African American steelworkers. He grew up feeling that he was never understood in the hardworking steel mill town.

Like many other African Americans in his community Clarke attended his local Baptist church every Sunday with his foster care provider. However, he was not content with unquestioningly following the sermons of the preacher. In fact, it was Clarke's opinion that he found the closest connection to God within himself and not in the holy confines of the church.

²⁹² When recalling his childhood Clarke gave different ages for how old he was when his mother died. Davis attributes the inconsistencies in Clark's early childhood memories to his desire to block out his traumatic childhood experiences. Ursula Broschke Davis, *Paris Without Regret*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1986) 39

As a result, he decided early in life that organized religion was not for him. When he was old enough, he refused to attend the Baptist church.²⁹³ This rebellion may have been the harbinger of his decision to convert to Islam later in life.

Clarke and Blakey grew up in the same area of Pittsburgh roughly around the same time and had very similar childhood experiences. Like Blakey, Clarke turned to music to escape from the racial tension he felt in Pittsburgh. Clarke first learned to play piano by ear remembering how his mother had played for him. Subsequently he took up the drums in school. Clarke's formal education was very limited. In fact he decided to leave school when he was fifteen in order to make a living as a professional musician.²⁹⁴ As Clarke began to perform in and around Pittsburgh he experienced instances of racial discrimination that left him with a strong disgust for the prejudice and injustices of his day. According to Ursula Davis in her work *Paris Without Regret*, "There were few, if any racially mixed groups in Pittsburgh at that time. Clarke recalls that white musicians played in the better clubs downtown and would not come to listen to the groups he played with."²⁹⁵ As he developed as a musician and matured as a man, Clarke found it difficult to relate to the white upper class or the lower working class black community so, "he became part of the world of black entertainers, looked upon suspiciously by both groups."²⁹⁶

It is with the drums that Clarke made his biggest impact in the jazz world and in particular on the development of bebop. Clarke realized when he first started to play the drums that the current style of drumming was heavy-handed and too loud. He described it thus:

At the time, to keep the tempo, it was necessary to choose a very loud instrument like drums to mark the beat without dominating the rest of the orchestra...to be heard, the

²⁹³ Broschke Davis, *Paris Without Regret*, 39

²⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 38

²⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 44

²⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 44

tuba player had to play long notes and this made the drummer change his style. But when Duke Ellington introduced the bass fiddle into his band, it became the instrument of tempo, and this induced the drummer to play more lightly. Or, at any rate, it should have done.²⁹⁷

Clarke recognized that a change in drumming style was necessary even though his contemporaries had not yet identified a problem with the way they played.

In his work, *Drummin' Men: The Heartbeat of Jazz: the Bebop Years*, Burt Korall describes Clarke's impact on modern jazz drumming. Korall states, "With the information and understanding provided over the last sixty years, it is clear that what Klook did was truly profound. He changed how time was viewed, used, and physically presented."²⁹⁸ Korall continues, "He made possible a more relaxed and interesting flow, generally increasing rhythmic possibilities. Physically, he could open up his arms and freely use his feet."²⁹⁹ While the impact that Clarke had on the drummers around him was immense, some claim that young musicians were actually misinterpreting what Clarke was doing. In an interview with Maurice Levy, Nathan Davis states that many young jazz drummers misunderstood what Clarke was doing with his bass drum. Clarke was actually playing the bass drum lightly on every beat and then accenting certain notes by playing those beats extra loud, however, the young drummers often would only hear the accented notes.³⁰⁰ This misinterpretation led directly to the highly accented bombs or bass drum strike associated with modern jazz drumming. Besides Kenny Clarke and

²⁹⁷ Mike Hennessey, *Klook: the story of Kenny Clarke*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. 1990.) 14

²⁹⁸ Korall, *Drummin' Men*, 6

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 77

³⁰⁰ Nathan T. Davis, Interview by Squinobal, December 1, 2008; also found in Davis interview by Maurice Levy, (Tape recording, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Oral History of Music in Pittsburgh Collection, August 19 1996)

Max Roach, no drummer is associated more with this style of modern drumming than Art Blakey.

Minton's Playhouse is widely recognized as one of the artistic centers of the development of bebop, and it is commonly known that the house band at Minton's boasted an all-star cast of young iconic bop musicians including Monk, Gillespie, Parker, and Charlie Christian. What is less known is that Kenny Clarke led the band and was responsible for gathering the musicians together.³⁰¹ The time Clarke and Monk spent at Minton's was one of great musical developments in jazz. In an interview with Art Taylor, Clarke discusses the important rhythmical changes that were happening at the time. He states, "Rhythmically, music has progressed quite a bit because the drummer was liberated in the Minton era. Before, drummers were just required to keep a four beat, dig coal in the snare drum and hit the cymbal at introductions and endings. Dizzy Gillespie and Thelonious Monk encouraged me to continue in the style I was playing. This liberated drummers and from then on they have progressed tremendously."³⁰² Clarke's innovations include shifting the steady 4/4 pulse from the bass drum to the ride cymbal, which subsequently allowed the use of the bass and snare drum for independent counter rhythms used to support and respond to the improvising musicians. This resulted in a polyrhythmic background that complemented the asymmetrical phrasing of the soloists, these drumming techniques became a model for Blakey and a standard for modern jazz drumming.³⁰³

³⁰¹ Olly Wilson, and Barry Kernfeld. "Clarke, Kenny" *Grove Music Online*
www.grovemusic.com (Accessed 16 January 2008.)

³⁰² Arthur Taylor, *Notes and Tones: Musician-To-Musician Interviews*, (New York: Perigee, 1982.) 200

³⁰³ Wilson, and Kernfeld, "Clarke, Kenny," *Grove Music Online*

More often than not, it is Max Roach who is given the majority of the credit for the development of the signature style of bebop drumming. However, Roach was a young teenager when Clarke was playing at Minton's. Clarke was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1943 and Roach took over many of Clarke's gigs. When Clarke returned from the war, he found Roach excelling at the drumming style that he had developed and as a result, Roach received a majority of the credit for developing a bebop style of drumming, when in fact it was Clarke who was the originator of the style. Furthermore, Roach had an outgoing personality; he was a showman, a performer as well as a musician. His outgoing personality made him a more popular sideman than Clarke who had a more reserved personality.

Clarke found an escape from the racial prejudice in Pittsburgh by moving to Paris after World War II. He would stay there for the majority of his life and become a jazz icon performing all over Europe. Nathan Davis met and performed with both Clarke and Blakey in Europe, also having relocated there after World War II. Davis was a regular member of Clarke's group in Paris, which held extended engagements at both the St. Germain and the Blue Note jazz clubs. Clarke much like Monk was a great mentor to young musicians. According to Davis, by hiring him, Clarke gave him the opportunity to play with many great jazz musicians. All of the famous musicians who came through Paris would sit in with Kenny Clarke's group and Davis played alongside every one of them.³⁰⁴ Clarke was always conscious of his position in jazz history. Interestingly, despite all his innovations and techniques Clarke felt his greatest attribute as a drummer was his ability to produce a beautiful tone from the drums.

According to Davis, in one meeting of Clarke's group and Blakey's Jazz Messengers, Clarke was very conscious not to be upstaged by Blakey. He implored his band members to play

³⁰⁴ Nathan Davis, interview by Squinobal

harder. He said to Nathan Davis, “Hey, Nat, we’ve got to play a little harder because Blakey’s guys are really burning.”³⁰⁵ Davis remembers that after imploring his bass player to pull harder on his strings, the bass player refused. According to Davis “Kenny said, ‘well you’re fired.’ He really got mad because he didn’t want to be upstaged by Blakey’s band.”³⁰⁶

After that gig, Wayne Shorter left the Jazz Messengers and Davis filled in for him on Blakey’s European tour. After playing with both Clarke and Blakey, Davis states that their sense of time and swing were very similar, and they were both phenomenal accompanists. They knew how to make a soloist shine.³⁰⁷

8.3 DIZZY GILLESPIE AND BILLY ECKSTINE’S BIG BAND

Alongside Monk and Clarke, Dizzy Gillespie was a third influential figure that spurred on the major developments of Weston, Blakey, and Lateef during the bebop revolution. The life and music of the famed trumpeter is well documented, and his role in the development of bebop is rarely minimized.³⁰⁸ However, his role as a mentor to young aspiring musicians growing up during the 1940s deserves mention here. Gillespie is an important link between Clarke and Blakey, as Gillespie was the first to really recognize both Clarke and Blakey as significant drum innovators. According to Gillespie, “Rhythm was always my thing...it really comes before the

³⁰⁵ Nathan Davis, interview by Squinobal

³⁰⁶ Hennessey, *Klook*, 148

³⁰⁷ Davis, interview by Squinobal,

³⁰⁸ See Alyn Shipton, *Groovin' High: The Life of Dizzy Gillespie*, (USA; Oxford University Press, 2001) and Dizzy Gillespie and Al Fraser, *To Be or not...To Bop: Memoirs of Dizzy Gillespie*, (New York; Da Capo Press, 1985)

other musical elements.”³⁰⁹ It was Gillespie who advocated the hiring of Blakey to fill the drum set seat in Billy Eckstine’s big band vacated by Clarke.

While in the band Gillespie acted as a mentor and a teacher to Blakey.³¹⁰ Speaking of innovations made by Blakey influenced by Gillespie, Burt Korall states, “His polyrhythmic concept was so important. This was one of bop’s greatest achievements—updating rhythm. It helped make it possible for jazz to move ahead. You say that Dizzy showed Blakey a lot? He taught him well indeed!”³¹¹ In an interview with Mike Hennessey, Clarke said of Blakey,

He’s from Pittsburgh, too, but five years younger than me. His father was my barber. He’d often come to hear me play and we talked a lot about drums. When he joined the Billy Eckstine band in 1944, that’s when he changed his style. Dizzy and Billy taught him to play like me. Dizzy said to him ‘play like Klook.’ So he began to play in my style—but in his own way. Blakey is really unique.³¹²

It should be mention that one of the most important elements that Monk, Clarke, and Gillespie contributed to jazz, and subsequently to the development of Weston, Blakey, and Lateef, was advancing the use of complex rhythm. This important contribution helped to identify the bebop revolution and in turn had an immense effect on the music that Blakey, Lateef and Weston would go on to make. Jones suggests, “What seems to me most important about the music of the forties was its reassertion of many non-Western concepts of music. Certainly the re-establishment of the hegemony of polyrhythms and the actual subjugation of melody to these rhythms are much closer to a purely African way of making music...”³¹³ Others would argue that implementation of more complex harmonic movement was equally important to bebop.

³⁰⁹ Korall, Burt. *Drummin' Men: The Heartbeat of Jazz: the Bebop Years*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.) 6.

³¹⁰ *Ibid*, 131

³¹¹ *Ibid*, 134

³¹² Hennessey, *Klook*, 148

³¹³ Jones, *Blues People*, 194

However, Monk, Clarke and Gillespie all gave priority to rhythmic development over both melody and harmony in their music. While I have already mentioned the innovations made by Clarke to the bebop style of drumming it is important to understand the closer connection this new style of drumming has to African traditional drumming aesthetics. For example, while maintaining a steady beat with his right hand the accomplished bop drummer could set up a complex polyrhythm using his hi-hats, bass drum, and left hand. Jones points out, “there a perfect analogy here to African music, where over one rhythm many other rhythms and a rhythmically derived melody are all juxtaposed.”³¹⁴

According to Blakey, his “first real spurt of development occurred during a three-year stint with the Billy Eckstine Band.”³¹⁵ In an interview with Art Taylor, Blakey underscores the impact that Eckstine’s band had on him. He states, “It was like a school for me and that’s when I realized that we had to have bands for young black musicians. It’s a school and they can train to become musicians and learn how to act like musicians.”³¹⁶ Blakey further explains the environment of the Eckstine band by stating, “The Eckstine band was...filled with high-level, ambitious students, all trying to go in the same direction, all seeking to live up to what they heard around them.”³¹⁷ This most certainly led to Blakey’s interest in mentoring young musicians.

After his time in Eckstine’s band Blakey attempted to form his own big band, the Seventeen Messengers, where he provided his own learning environment for young musicians. He explains his intentions; “I wanted more black musicians to get the schooling they needed to

³¹⁴ Jones, *Blues People*, 195

³¹⁵ David Rosenthal, “Conversation with Art Blakey,” (*The Black Perspective in Music*, XIV/3 (1986), 267-89,) 267

³¹⁶ Taylor, *Notes and Tones*, 255

³¹⁷ Korall, *Drummin’ Men*, 131.

become leaders, that's what we needed in jazz."³¹⁸ The attraction to the family atmosphere provided by the Eckstine band may be due to his own lack of family support as a child. "Blakey insisted big band experience was important to musicians, because it provided education on several levels and what he often described as a family atmosphere."³¹⁹ Later, his Jazz Messenger small groups served as learning grounds for young musicians. As a result, a great many young jazz musicians got their big break with Art Blakey and went on to have successful performance careers of their own.

8.4 LATEEF AND BEBOP

In 1948 Lateef joined Gillespie's big band. He formed a close relationship with Sabu Martinez, a conga player who had replaced Chano Pozo and was playing with Gillespie at the time. At this time Clarke and Monk were also in Gillespie's band. Once again, Gillespie acted as the glue that pulled together so many of important influences that helped Weston, Lateef, and Blakey to develop as musicians. To emphasize the value of performing in Gillespie's group Lateef states, "Being a member of Dizzy's band for two years was like attending a top flight musical academy."³²⁰ Furthermore Lateef formed a close bond with Martinez during his time with Gillespie and this relationship would prove to be very fruitful for Lateef in coming years.

³¹⁸ Taylor, *Notes and Tones*, 255

³¹⁹ Korall, *Drummin' Men*, 135

³²⁰ Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 51

Lateef was back in Detroit after his stint with Gillespie and became an active member of the music scene during the 1950s. Lateef's first gig was at the Ace High Club where he would perform for traveling variety acts that came through town. However, it was his gig at the Blue Bird that led to the development of Bebop in Detroit. As Bjorn points out:

It all started in 1948 when the Blue Bird hired pianist Phil Hill and told him to assemble a house band specializing in the newest thing from New York City - bebop. There had been music at the Blue Bird Inn intermittently since the mid-'30s, but this was the first time that the new generation of beboppers was heard there.³²¹

Lateef joined Hill's group shortly after moving back to Detroit. According to him, bebop and the young musicians creating the music had an important impact on his own playing. Lateef says, "I was very fortunate to come along at this time and to absorb so much of the energy and the creativity that seemed to abound from one city to another."³²² Lateef sees *Hard Bop*, a style of jazz made popular in the 1950s and 60s, as an extension of bebop. He states, "The Jazz Messengers led by Art Blakey, typified this new style, which to a large degree was nothing more than an extension of the music associated with Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie of the previous generation. What actually became very popular in the sixties was already in development in the early fifties."³²³

³²¹ Bjorn, "Detroit Music History" <http://www.ipl.org/div/detjazz/Reading.html>

³²² Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 35

³²³ *Ibid*, 81

9.0 CHAPTER 9: THE IMPACT OF ISLAM AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

As modern jazz continued to develop through the 1940s and 50s there was a strong association between African American jazz musicians, Civil Rights activism, and conversion to Islam. One of the major proponents for a large population of African Americans to convert to Islam was the prominence of the Ahmadiyya movement in the United States in the 1940s. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization that was established in 1889 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) in a small and remote village, Qadian, in the Punjab region of India. The Ahmadiyya form of Islam appealed to many people at the time because it advocates peace, tolerance, love, and understanding among followers of different faiths. Still today this religious community encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam, and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. The appealing aspect of the Ahmadiyya movement heightened African Americans interest the 1940s and convinced musicians like Clarke, Blakey, and Lateef to convert to Islam. Monson states, “The 1940s witnessed a peak of internationalism in the African American political consciousness and a growing interest in Islam, especially the multiracial version of the Muslim faith propagated by the Ahmadiyya movement. Art Blakey and several other jazz musicians, Ahmad Jamal, Yusef Lateef...were members of the Ahmadi community.”³²⁴ One of the features of Islam that attracted many African American musicians

³²⁴ Ingrid Monson, “Art Blakey’s African Diaspora,” In *The African Diaspora*. Monson, Ed. (London: Routledge, 2003) 330

was the lack of distinction between races. The Ahmadiyya movement was particularly persuasive arguing, “that Islam was a better religion for black people worldwide than Christianity, since Islam was without caste and color prejudice.”³²⁵ Eschewing racial discrimination was one of the strongest motivations for conversion to Islam. Gourse claims that most African American musicians who converted to Islam began using Muslim names to protect them from racism. “As dark-skinned Muslims, they counted on being entitled to freedom of religion and equality under the law.”³²⁶

Many jazz musicians learned about Islam together and encouraged one another to convert. Kenny Clarke converted to Islam in 1946. He was attracted to the Islam because of disheartening experiences with organized Christianity during his childhood in Pittsburgh. Blakey converted to Islam around the time he formed the big band the *Seventeen Messengers*. According to Gourse, Blakey converted to Islam on his trip to West Africa in 1948.³²⁷

The Ahmadiyya movement also influenced Lateef’s conversion to Islam in the same year. Lateef found he was deeply interested in religion from a very early age.³²⁸ After converting to Islam, he would congregate with other musicians at Art Blakey’s New York apartment to study the Holy Qur’an. Discussing this time in his life, Lateef states:

The meetings were at Abdullah Ibn Buhaina’s house; he was formerly Art Blakey... I recall that he had traveled to Africa to learn more about Islam... During this time I became a part of Buhaina’s large band, which was called the [Seventeen] Messengers. Brother Buhaina’s style, ingenuity, and leadership quality of his band allowed me, as a member, to feel free to exercise my utmost artistic ability that God had given me.³²⁹

³²⁵ Monson, “Art Blakey’s African Diaspora,” 334

³²⁶ Leslie Gourse, *Art Blakey: Jazz Messenger*. (New York: Schirmer Trade Books, 2002.) 40-41

³²⁷ Gourse, *Art Blakey*, 15

³²⁸ Lateef, interview by Squinobal, 2007

³²⁹ Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 58

When asked what the motivation was for so many African Americans to convert to Islam Lateef states, “I believe that the motivation for any human being to embrace Islam is that when almighty God turns a person’s heart to Islam (peace) there is no other choice for that person.”³³⁰

Nathan Davis points out that the Ahmadiyya sect was not the only Islamic sect to attract African American musicians. Many musicians converted to Islam regardless of the fact that they were African Americans. He states, “Frequently, their conversation to Islam had nothing to do with the ‘Black Muslim’ movement. These musicians were primarily interested in studying the Qur’an and living by its teachings.”³³¹ One of the biggest and earliest proponents of conversion to Islam was trumpeter Talib Dawud. A member of Dizzy Gillespie’s big band, Dawud was a major factor in converting musicians who played with Gillespie. Davis states, “Before musicians began meeting at Buhaina’s house they were meeting with Dawud at his home. Talib was a big influence on Clarke, Blakey and Lateef.”³³²

Many of those who did convert to Islam, including Blakey, were often accused of loathing their heritage. In an interview with David Rosenthal, Blakey commented on his identity as an African American. “I have no identity problem, and I love what I am. I thank God that I was born in America.”³³³ However, Blakey did not like having an Irish last name. He knew his mother’s side of his family came from West Africa and he wanted to honor that heritage. He continues, “I took an Islamic name simply because that’s my heritage. I come from a people who come from there.”³³⁴

³³⁰ Lateef, interview by Squinobal

³³¹ Davis, interview by Squinobal

³³² *Ibid*

³³³ Rosenthal, “Conversation with Art Blakey,” 276

³³⁴ *Ibid*, 276

Reconnecting with a distant African heritage was an underlying factor for many musicians who converted to Islam. Many of the musicians who converted to Islam at this time also utilized African musical material in their music. Monson states, “Muslim musicians were prominent in several of the musical projects that made links to Africa and the diaspora. The universalist message of Islam provided an alternative to Western modernism’s vision of universality that would play an increasingly important role in the spiritual visions of jazz musicians in the 1960s.”³³⁵

While Blakey and Lateef were reconnecting with their African heritage by converting to Islam, Weston reconnected with his African heritage by strengthening his understanding of the role African traditional music played in the creation of jazz. It was at the height of the Civil Rights Movement and pride in African traditional culture was very high. All of Weston’s previous influences fit well with the political climate. The appreciation Weston had developed for African culture blossomed during this time and he capitalized on the renewed public interest in African culture to learn as much as he could about African music.

In the 1950’s Weston spent eight summers in Lenox, Massachusetts where he met Marshall Sterns and participated in his Jazz history classes, demonstrating modern jazz on the piano. Sterns reinforced Weston’s understanding that jazz originated in Africa and not simply in New Orleans.³³⁶ Weston also met other inspirational colleagues during his summers in Lenox. “I spent time in the Berkshires with African choreographer Osadali DuForum. He inspired me to collect African traditional music; it was a natural process of listening, but not necessarily

³³⁵ Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 147

³³⁶ Gitler “Randy Weston,” 17

listening with your ears, almost like listening with your spirit.”³³⁷ While back in New York during the fall, winter, and spring, Weston began to pursue interests in Africa by interacting with people from the United Nations. He met with visiting officials from different countries. And would frequently ask them for traditional music from their respective countries. “I’d always ask about the music. They might give me a tape or a book, and I slowly started to learn.”³³⁸ Weston’s musical development and research culminated in an extended composition called *Uhuru Afrika* that fused together African traditional musical material with jazz.

9.1 CIVIL RIGHTS

As Lateef, Blakey and Weston gained recognition as professional musicians, African American jazz musicians and the African American community as a whole intensified their pursuit of equality and improved civil rights in America. Monson identifies a shift in the ideology of race in the jazz community from an affirmation of a colorblind inclusiveness to “the assertion of a black-identified consciousness on the part of many African American musicians and their supporters.”³³⁹ This ideological change paralleled a rise in intensity of Civil Rights activities among the African American community, and the emergence of Black Nationalism and black power.³⁴⁰

The time between 1950 and 1967 in United States history proved to solidify the direction Blakey, Lateef, and Weston would take their professional careers. The 1950s and 60s were the

³³⁷ Willard Jenkins, “Freeing His Roots” *Downbeat* (February 2005)

³³⁸ Panken “African Soul,” 20

³³⁹ Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 12

³⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 12

beginning of a new era in the history of Civil Rights struggle in the United States. While the fight for equality began about one hundred years earlier, Louis Porter states, “There was little debate among African Americans about the need for civil rights, increasingly a concern of [African Americans] since World War II.”³⁴¹ The 1950s mark an increase in intensity and organization in the fight for African American equality; and brought the peaceful organizing of Martin Luther King Jr. and the sometimes-violent rhetoric of Malcolm X. Jazz musicians became involved in all aspects of the fight for civil rights and played major roles in the battle.

As stated above, there was no distinct split between the period of time known as the Civil Rights movement and the decades leading up to that time. In fact the period of time between the 1950s and 60s is similar to the previously mentioned Harlem Renaissance in many interesting ways. Guy Booker, in an article titled, “Colored Historians Too Lazy to Write Own History of Jazz; Let Whites Do It,” for the *Philadelphia Tribune*, indicates that there was a push for African Americans to assimilate into white culture, in the same manner that initiators of the Harlem Renaissance did at the beginning of that movement. He states, “So anxious are they to show how much [African American’s] ‘are just like white folks’ that they shun the sordid, wretched, often vile background of jazz.”³⁴² While this is only one short article in a local magazine, it indicates two important aspects of the beginning of the Civil Rights movement. First it shows that there was some sentiment that African Americans were once again shunning their own cultural heritage in an effort to obtain equality. Furthermore, it shows that many people viewed this attempt at acculturation incredulously.

³⁴¹ Louis Porter, “Race Politics and Jazz in the 1950s and 1960s,” in *Jazz: A Century of Change*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997.)

³⁴² Guy Booker, “Colored Historians Too Lazy to Write Own History of Jazz; Let Whites Do It,” (*Philadelphia Tribune*, weekly magazine section, August 13 1955)

In his book, *the Impact of Black Nationalist Ideology on American Jazz Music of the 1960s and 1970s*, John Baskerville points out that African Americans have been treated as an inferior class since the time of slavery. They have responded to this inferior status in a number of ways. He states, “some [African Americans] attempt to distance themselves from this negative image of ‘blackness’ through assimilation. Often, an African American individual attempts to identify with the so-called dominant group to demonstrate his/her high-level of acculturation and adoption of the dominant cultural paradigm, indicating a suitability for full participation within the mainstream.”³⁴³ This assimilation was observed at the onset of the Harlem Renaissance and again at the beginning of the Civil Rights movement.

Collectively, African Americans have sought to integrate into American society. This desire to become an equal participant in the society has produced an ebb and flow in the political, social, and economic status of African Americans over the decades. Baskerville states, “During brief moments of inclusiveness, African Americans generally strongly emphasized the ‘American’ and de-emphasized the ‘African’ to demonstrate their similarity to other Americans. But, in those moments of fallen expectations, some reject the American side of their existence and attempt to embrace the ‘African’ side.”³⁴⁴ It seems that the moments of fallen expectations that Baskerville mentions, propelled cultural change in both the Harlem Renaissance and during the Civil Rights movement. At both times, African Americans embraced the African side of their cultural heritage and intensified efforts to bring awareness to the importance of African cultural roots in America.

³⁴³ Baskerville, *The Impact of Black Nationalist Ideology on American*, 5

³⁴⁴ Baskerville, *The Impact of Black Nationalist Ideology on American*, 6

Many of the musicians who had been involved in the Harlem Renaissance also recognized similarities and echoes in the Civil Rights movement. In his autobiography, Ellington commented on the Civil Rights movement, “It is the same now with the Muslim movement, and a lot of West Indian people are involved in it. There are many resemblances to the Marcus Garvey schemes.”³⁴⁵ Again, in this statement we can see the many ways that this period in American history was similar to that of the Harlem Renaissance movement. One could say that the Civil Rights movement is an intensified period of the same fight that African Americans have struggled with since their emancipation.

In the United States during the 1960s, many African Americans began to reiterate the belief that the black population in America constituted a distinct nationality, a “black nation,” with a cultural consciousness distinct from the larger society.³⁴⁶ This is a central concept in Baskerville’s work. He states:

Cultural nationalists believed that members of the African Diaspora possessed a distinct cultural heritage that originated on the African continent. Although variations emerged over the years due to the dispersion of Africans globally through the transatlantic slave trade, much of the primordial culture remained intact. Cultural nationalists contended that before global black liberation could be attained people of African descent—particularly those living in the United States, the Caribbean, and Europe—had to reassert and embrace their cultural heritage and eliminate all alien cultural influences.³⁴⁷

Baskerville’s passage, supports the idea that the Civil Rights movement in the United States, again like the Harlem Renaissance movement, marked an attempt to ‘reassert and embrace’ African cultural heritage. This was done through the work of artists and musicians of the time and this resurgence of African cultural heritage led to another cultural arts movement.

³⁴⁵ Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, 108-109

³⁴⁶ Baskerville, *The Impact of Black Nationalist Ideology on American Jazz*, 22

³⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 37

There is a common misconception of the make-up of advocate groups of the 1960s Civil Rights movement. It is frequently thought that there were two opposing groups; those supporting integration into American society and those that sought to create a separate but equal Black Nationalist society. Groups that are usually associated with advocating complete integration are the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).³⁴⁸ In contrast, the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X, and the Black Panther Party are generally associated with a Black Nationalist ideology that “emphasized black economic and political self-determination, cultural autonomy, and, in some cases, separatism.”³⁴⁹ Some of the most extreme groups have emphasized the establishment of a separate black state. However Monson states:

Separatism...has *not* been the defining issue for Black Nationalism. More widely supported aspects of Black Nationalism include economic self-determination, cultural self-definition, and the development of autonomous black-led organizations. In the twentieth-century, Black Nationalism emphasized the special place of Africa as a historical, cultural, and spiritual homeland. Black Marxism, in addition, emphasized the connection between the U.S. struggle for racial justice and the national liberation struggles of the formerly colonized nations.³⁵⁰

Relationships between groups and the issues caused by those relationships were in fact more complicated. Monson warns that we must also keep in mind the relationship between these African American liberal groups and white liberal political ideology. She states, “If mainstream liberalism in the United States has emphasized, above all, individualism and equal opportunity in the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness, black liberalism has consistently differed in two key dimensions.” African Americans placed a greater emphasis on the equality of economic

³⁴⁸ Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 13

³⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 13

³⁵⁰ Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 14

opportunity, the equality of economic outcome, and on the fate of the African American community as a whole.³⁵¹

9.2 THE AMERICAN “BLACK” ARTS MOVEMENT

During this time of political unrest and struggle for civil rights, African Americans again developed a renewed interest in their historical roots and African traditional culture, and another renaissance began to bloom. Floyd states that this cultural movement was “known collectively as the Black Arts Movement, and [it was] a nationalistic, Pan-African cultural awakening that was ‘nurtured by a belief in the positive value of blackness’. It signaled a return to myth: it became acceptable, respectable, even expected, for African Americans to seek out, believe in, and display their mythological roots.”³⁵² Jazz musicians and their music became an important element of the Black Arts movement. Through their music they began to connect with African traditional cultural roots.

One of the most important roles jazz musicians of the Black Arts movement played was in helping to change the perspective of African traditional music. The perception that Africa was a savage and primal place still lingered in America at the time. However, great strides to appreciate and understand traditional Africa were made during the Black Arts movement, in large part due to the work of jazz musicians. In his book *A Night in Tunisia: Imaginings of Africa in Jazz*, N.C. Weinstein describes a process by which the ‘savage’ perception of Africa was first discarded before the use of African traditional musical elements were effective in the

³⁵¹ *Ibid*, 13-14

³⁵² Floyd, Jr., *The Power of Black Music*, 185

work of African American musicians. He states, “African American artists in search of their African connections must initially deconstruct the fixed body of distorted African imagery that racists have historically disseminated in multitudinous forms. After these images are deconstructed, various elements can be recombined so that new perspectives can be gained.”³⁵³ The deconstruction Weinstein identifies became more active during the Black Arts movement because musicians began to interact with African musicians both in Africa and in the United States.

It is in the use of specific African traditional musical techniques that the Black Arts movement can be differentiated from the Harlem Renaissance movement. The Harlem Renaissance attempted to capture the spirit of what people thought was African. It was very important symbolically, regardless of how accurately Africa was depicted. During the Black Arts movement there were more accurate depictions of African traditional musical material because jazz musicians were traveling to Africa, interacting with African musicians in the United States, and recorded materials were becoming more and more available in the United States.

In the 1950s, jazz musicians began to travel to Africa to perform. Louis Armstrong was one of the first jazz musicians to make a trip to Ghana and he was received by a great procession of African highlife musicians. Jazz drummers Max Roach and Randy Weston both traveled to Africa in the late 1950s and their experiences most certainly influenced the multitude of musicians that they performed with. Also during this time period, African musicians were coming to the United States and performing with jazz musicians. For example Guy Warren, also known as Ghanaba, came to the United States in the summer of 1950 and played with many jazz musicians in and around Chicago. Likewise, Nigerian drummer, Babatunde Olatunji came to the

³⁵³ Weinstein, *A Night in Tunisia*, 12

United States in 1954 and settled in New York City.³⁵⁴ He collaborated with many well-known jazz artists of the time including John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, Yusef Lateef, and Clark Terry, and had a huge influence on Randy Weston.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ Gregory F. Bartz, "Olatunji, Babatunde," *New Grove Online*. ed. L. Macy (Accessed 17, March 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

³⁵⁵ Floyd, Jr., *The Power of Black Music*, 188(n)

10.0 CHAPTER 10: TRIPS TO AFRICA AND THE INFLUENCE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSICIANS ON HIGHLIFE

African Americans struggling to improve civil rights in America were deftly aware of the struggles of people throughout the African Diaspora. This includes the struggles of emerging independent nations on the African continent and many Caribbean islands. The Pittsburgh Courier, Chicago Defender, and the New York Amsterdam News, all African American news publications, carried stories that helped African Americans to stay current on the international struggles for freedom and civil rights. African American civil rights leaders also traveled to major urban areas in Europe, including London and Paris, and expatriate African Americans had ample opportunity to join in the fight. In 1965, while performing at the annual Gran Prix de Disc Awards in Paris, Davis was responsible for announcing to an impatient crowd that the Paris police had detained Malcolm X at the airport.³⁵⁶

African American musicians struggling to improve their civil rights began to identify with Africans who were fighting for independence. Although there may not have been a direct political connection African Americans found a spiritual connection with people in Africa and throughout the diaspora who were gaining their independence from European colonists.³⁵⁷ These musicians equated the United States government to European colonial governments, despite the

³⁵⁶ Malcolm X was detained by the authorities in Paris for fear that he would incite a riot. Davis, interview by Squinobal

³⁵⁷ Shipton, *New Histories of Jazz*, 837

efforts of the U.S. government State Department tours, which attempted to promote the advantages of a capitalistic society over the communist alternative.³⁵⁸

Davis states that many African American jazz musicians in the 1950s and 60s were doing ethnomusicological work without even realizing it.³⁵⁹ Beginning in the 50s, more and more jazz musicians began to travel internationally and perform for people around the world on diplomatic tours sponsored by the State Department. As a result of these international tours, jazz musicians began to interact with local musicians.³⁶⁰ This interaction developed into an interchange of musical and cultural ideas and inspired jazz musicians to integrate music from around the world into their own musical compositions and performances. These tour itineraries took musicians all over the world and gave African American musicians the opportunity to travel to Africa, experience African music and culture, and interact with African musicians.³⁶¹

Blakey, Weston, and Lateef each separately made at least one trip to Africa. These trips were some of the most important and influential events in each musician's life. Taking their trips at different times in their lives and going for different reasons, Blakey, Weston, and Lateef each brought back with them an increased knowledge and appreciation of their African heritage. Blakey was the first of the three to travel to the African continent. He worked his way over to Nigeria on a ship in 1947 and stayed for a little over a year.

³⁵⁸ Davis, *African American Music*, 133

³⁵⁹ Davis, interview by Squinobal

³⁶⁰ Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 117

³⁶¹ *Ibid*

10.1 BLAKEY GOES TO WEST AFRICA

Blakey was very much aware of his African ancestry. In an interview with Enstice and Rubin Blakey states, “My grandfather and my great-grandfather...were [both] descendants of Africa...the part of Africa where they came from was Guinea, West Africa.”³⁶² Blakey had an urge to connect with this part of his past, perhaps because he was orphaned at an early age when his mother died and his father abandoned him. He did a research project on Africa while still in grammar school. His conversion to Islam was also, in part, a way to establish a connection with his past. Blakey traveled to Africa to learn more about Islamic culture.³⁶³ Blakey has described his trip to Africa in several interviews. In one he states:

I went to Nigeria. I went to Ghana before it was a state, to the Gold Coast and around there. To study; to learn. I wanted to learn what it was all about. I learned a lot...to get an understanding of people. You know, not to learn the religion thoroughly but just to learn enough to know the difference, just to have the wisdom to know the difference.³⁶⁴

It has been claimed many times that Blakey was significantly influenced by the music he heard on his trip. Some journalists even insist that he made the trip to find out more about West African music, drums, and rhythm.³⁶⁵ In interviews, Blakey consistently disputes the claim that he traveled specifically to acquire West African traditional drumming techniques on his trip. Blakey states, “I didn’t go to Africa to study drums...I went to Africa because there wasn’t anything else for me to do. I couldn’t get any gigs, and I had to work my way over on a boat.”³⁶⁶ Not only does Blakey deny a musical purpose for his journey to Africa, he refuses to

³⁶² Enstice and Rubin, *Jazz Spoken Here*, 19

³⁶³ Lewis and Kernfeld “Art Blakey,” *Grove Music Online* (Accessed 16 January 2008. www.grovemusic.com)

³⁶⁴ Rosenthal, “Conversation with Art Blakey,” 276

³⁶⁵ Korall, *Drummin' Men*, 139

³⁶⁶ Weinstein, *A Night in Tunisia*, 51

acknowledge any resulting musical influence. Yet upon his return he adopted several African-sounding performance techniques including rapping on the side of the drum and using his elbow on the tom-tom to alter pitch.³⁶⁷

Just the insistence itself that he did not have the opportunity to hear any drumming because he was studying religion—which he makes—is contradictory. How could Blakey study religion in Africa without experiencing musical performance? West African religions, even Islam, are intimately connected to music especially during rituals and religious celebrations.³⁶⁸ Monson suggests that, “Although Blakey traveled to Nigeria, he spent the majority of his time in Accra, Ghana. There he is likely to have encountered the drumming traditions of the Southern Ewe and Akan people.”³⁶⁹ There is also a discrepancy between what Blakey says about the relationship between African music and jazz and the way he employs African music in his own playing. Blakey’s collaborations with West African and Afro-Cuban musicians on recordings and performances after his return from West Africa shows a decided interest in West African music. His improvised solos on African influenced pieces like “Tobi Ilu” contains very specific West African master drum phrases.³⁷⁰

While Weston express a strong sense of a connection between Africans, African Americans and the heritage shared by all people of the African diaspora, Blakey expresses a very different view. He states, “I’ve seen people try to connect [jazz] to other countries, for instance Africa, but it doesn’t have a damn thing to do with Africa. We’re a multiracial society here, there

³⁶⁷ Porter and Kernfeld. “Art Blakey,” *Grove Music Online*

³⁶⁸ Nketia, *The Music of Africa*, 9-13

³⁶⁹ Monson, “Art Blakey’s African Diaspora,” 337

³⁷⁰ Art Blakey, *The African Beat*. Blue Note, 1962; see chapter 15 for an analysis of Blakey’s use of master drum improvised solo phrases.

are no black people in America who can say they are of pure African descent.”³⁷¹ He continues by highlighting the emphasis placed on rhythm in traditional African music; “Our music has nothing to do with Africa. African music is entirely different and the Africans are much more advanced than we are rhythmically, though we’re more advanced harmonically.”³⁷²

Blakey defends jazz as an individual and original American art form independent of African music in the above statements in order to give importance to what he was doing and to not diminish what he and other jazz musicians have accomplished. In another interview he states, “A lot of people try to connect jazz with Africa and all that kind of thing. You can’t connect that. You have to have the wisdom to know the difference. They have their thing; we have our thing. The Latinos have their thing; we have our thing. It’s just like that. No America no Jazz.”³⁷³ Blakey’s argument is not political as much as it is national. He wants international and domestic fan and music aficionados to give jazz its full due as an American art form. It is important to understand the fact that in his statements Blakey emphasizes the necessity of the American experience on African Americans for the development of jazz. In multiple interviews he stressed the originality of jazz and the credit Americans should get for creating it. In an interview with Gourse he states:

I’ve had African Drummers in my band—they’ve toured with me—but they have nothing to do with what we are doing. You have to respect the African for what he is doing...But you can’t mix what comes out of the African cultures with what came out of our culture. People try to put Africa and jazz together. Well, that’s the biggest lie ever told. This thing happened over here; it happened in this society. It’s about Americans and every American has a share in it.³⁷⁴

³⁷¹ Taylor, *Notes and Tones*, 256

³⁷² *Ibid*, 257

³⁷³ Rosenthal, “Conversation with Art Blakey,” 276

³⁷⁴ Gourse, *Art Blakey*, 40

In Blakey's assessment, jazz would not have been possible if African slaves had not been forced into slavery and all of the hardships that came with it.

Although most of the time Blakey adamantly denies any link between African music and jazz, there are other times when his statements contradict this assertion. For example, while discussing the tuning of his drum set in an interview with Art Taylor, Blakey states, "I don't tune them to any notes. The Africans don't tune their drums, and they beat them [to death.] They sound good. An African uses whatever sounds good to his ear at the time."³⁷⁵ Furthermore, depending on the situation and the desired results, Blakey changed his claims as to what he experienced while in West Africa. For example, in the introduction included on the recording with his composition "Ritual" Blakey talks again about his trip to Africa: "In 1947 after the Eckstine band broke up we took a trip to Africa. I was supposed to stay there three months and I stayed two years because I wanted to live among the people and find out just how they lived and about the drums especially."³⁷⁶ Giving a rare specific example of what he did while in West Africa, Blakey says that while living among the Ijaw in Nigeria, he would listen to drummers play about the day's activities. The different rhythms "caught his ear" and became the basis for his composition, "Ritual"³⁷⁷ It's interesting to listen to this commentary because you can hear slight hesitations in Blakey's voice and the encouragement of his interviewer, as if Blakey might not necessarily want to be forthcoming with this information. It seems to me that the commentary was provoked by the record producers who felt that the title track of the recording, "Ritual" required an explanation in Blakey's own words as it differed significantly from the rest of the

³⁷⁵ Taylor, *Notes and Tones*, 259. It must be noted that many West African drummers do in fact tune their drums and they are very conscious of the tone, resonance and pitch of their drums. (Kofi Gbolonyo, personal communication)

³⁷⁶ Art Blakey, "Art Blakey's Comments on Ritual", *Ritual*, Blue Note Records January 14, 1957

³⁷⁷ Ibid

album. A year previous to this recording Blakey released an album for Columbia titled *Drum Suite* that featured a suite of three compositions “The Sacrifice,” “Cubano Chant,” and “Oscalypso,” that all utilizes significant African and Afro-Cuban drumming and rhythms.³⁷⁸ However *Ritual* was his first release with Blue Note Record that featured West African inspired music.

Despite what Blakey might have said in interviews, his playing shows that he was quite influenced by African and Afro-Cuban drumming techniques and the musicians who were around him at the time understood what he was doing. Weston credits Blakey’s use of West African traditional music in the 1950s as a strong inspiration on his own use of African traditional music. Weston says that Blakey’s musical output was more important than what he might have said pertaining to the relationship between African music and jazz.³⁷⁹

Blakey is responsible for bringing about a return to the use of African music in jazz that was once prevalent in the late forties but had disappeared for about a decade. Monson states, “While 1947 and 1948 saw many collaborations between Machito’s Afro-Cubans and various jazz musicians...these experiments seemed to dry up as the Cold War set in, not to be revised until Art Blakey’s work with Afro-Cuban drummers at the time of Ghana’s independence in March 1957.”³⁸⁰

Many musicians who played with Blakey and scholars who have examined his music identify influence from both Africa and Latin America. Ray Barretto states that, “No other

³⁷⁸ Art Blakey, *Drum Suite*, Colombia Records 1956.

³⁷⁹ Weston Interview with Jason Squinobal, 2007; Weston is also quoted in Monson, “Art Blakey’s African Diaspora,” 339

³⁸⁰ Monson, “Art Blakey’s African Diaspora,” 333

drummer came closer to the African and Latin Root as Blakey.”³⁸¹ Korall points out that these influences began around the time he went to Africa:

“As early as the latter years of the 1940s, he began looking into African and Latin root sources, absorbing rhythms and techniques essential to the two intersecting musical streams. His interest in techniques of Latin and African derivation progressively become a factor in his playing... Blakey had a flair for juggling a variety of musical elements and making them collectively work for him. His Tom-Tom playing, the way he used his elbow to change a drum’s sound, and his timbale and cow bell techniques, as applied to jazz, all grew out of his burgeoning Afro-Latin interests.”³⁸²

These examples show that Blakey was not only interested in the music of West Africa but also that of the African Diaspora in the Caribbean. Thus, shortly after his trip he began using musical elements of both West Africa and the Caribbean in a way that created a pan-African musical soundscape that would indeed influence the music of Randy Weston and Yusef Lateef.

10.2 WESTON AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT

Weston had the opportunity to travel throughout West Africa on two State Department sponsored tours. These trips gave Weston the opportunity to hear first hand the same music he so eagerly collected from African delegates at the United Nations. While on tour he had to endure the demeaning attitude of United States officials who lived in Africa and helped to organize the trips. Weston noted that white Americans living overseas seemed to be behind the times and even less tolerant than people back in the US, not only to him and other African Americans on the tour, but

³⁸¹ Korall, *Drummin' Men*, 139

³⁸² *Ibid*, 139

also to the locals.³⁸³ He also spoke about the challenges of trying to put on a tour in newly independent African nations in areas where the performance situations were not ideal or even adequate. Yet, he also valued his time in Africa so much that he eventually moved to Morocco and lived there from 1966-72.

During his two trips, Weston interacted with local musicians. Weston notes, “I wanted to hear where I came from, why I play like I play... Hearing traditional music was like hearing jazz, blues, and the black church all at the same time.”³⁸⁴ Weston had the opportunity to hear traditional music being performed and absorbed as much as he could. Speaking about the 1963 tour to Nigeria he states, “I gave demonstrations on the piano and I would tape Nigerian folk music, then take the same melodies and the same rhythms and play it on the piano, and explain to them that this music that is called jazz...is really an extension of African culture.”³⁸⁵

In one of his most influential experiences, Weston had the opportunity to interact with modern urban musicians in Lagos, Nigeria. Up until this point Weston had focused on utilizing elements of West African traditional music. However, after interacting with popular musicians in Lagos, he began to borrow elements of modern African popular music as well. While in Lagos Weston performed with Nigerian highlife and Afro Beat star Fela Kuti and his group Koola Lobitos. He also played a gig at the Shrine, Fela’s nightclub.³⁸⁶ While introducing a composition at a live solo performance at the 2005 Symposium of Composition in Africa and the

³⁸³ Weston, Interview with Jason Squinobal, 2007

³⁸⁴ Ted Panken “African Soul” *Down Beat*, (October 1, 1998) 20

³⁸⁵ Laurent Goddet, “Interview With Randy Weston,” *Coda*, Issue 159 (February 1978) 9

³⁸⁶ Veal, *Fela*, 218

Diaspora, Weston states that he spent time with Bobby Benson, a famous highlife musician, at his club the Caban Bamboo.³⁸⁷

These examples of his activities with African popular musicians in Lagos are important to understanding the inclusion of African popular musical elements into his music after his tours with the State Department. While he initially looked forward to learning more about West African traditional music, he found kindred spirits in the popular musicians who lived like he lived and advocated Civil Rights through their music, in much the same way that he did back in the United States. Weston would capitalize on his experiences in Africa when he came back to the United States by recording the Album *Highlife Jazz*, in which he synthesized elements of West African highlife with jazz.³⁸⁸ One might also describe Weston's choice to incorporate West African music a process of creolization, though not often used to describe modern jazz, Weston was making a conscious effort to create a creolized African American music. The term is appropriate here because it distinguishes Weston's efforts, which were intentional rather than forced.

When Weston returned to the United States at the end of his tour he was turned off by the free jazz that many jazz musicians were beginning to perform. Weston saw this music as a political rebellion and angry music. He never became interested in performing free jazz and the negative attitude that he felt from many of his fellow musicians was a huge disappointment to him. The negative environment created because of the political unrest and anger expressed by musicians was a major reason for Weston's relocation to Morocco.³⁸⁹ While he was concerned

³⁸⁷ Weston, solo performance, Symposium for African Composition organized and hosted by Akin Euba, Cambridge 2005

³⁸⁸ Weston, Randy. *Highlife: Music from the New African Nations*. Colpix, 1963

³⁸⁹ Weston, Interview with Squinobal

about the political movements of the 1960s, Weston chose to deal with them in a more spiritual and peaceful way rather than in anger and civil unrest.

10.3 LATEEF'S NIGERIAN FIELD WORK

Lateef made a few short trips to the African continent in the 1960s. In 1966 Lateef traveled to Saudi Arabia; however, like Blakey, he states that he did not perform there and went solely for religious purposes.³⁹⁰ While on tour in Europe in the mid 60s, Lateef made a brief appearance in Tunis because he had never been to a North Africa city. During his visit he made a concerted effort to listen to the traditional music.³⁹¹ He states, “When I heard the sound of the double bamboo flute or the double reed instrument, I knew I had to incorporate that sound into my repertory.”³⁹² As a result of his trips to North Africa, Lateef began to incorporate hand-made flutes and double reed instruments into his own music. He began making his own flutes he says, because they were so hard to find in the United States.³⁹³ He describes this process stating, “I made some bamboo flutes, the same way the Fulani herdsman of Nigeria make flutes out of the baguda trees.”³⁹⁴

These initial short excursions to Saudi Arabia and Tunis led to a much larger trip later in life, when Lateef spent a year doing field research in Northern Nigeria for the Center for

³⁹⁰ Lateef, interview by Squinobal

³⁹¹ *Ibid*

³⁹² Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 117

³⁹³ Lateef, interview by Squinobal

³⁹⁴ Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 110

Nigerian Cultural Studies at Ahmadu Bello University in 1981.³⁹⁵ However Lateef spent much of the time between his trips to Africa researching the timbral capabilities of his wind instruments to the extent that he acquired the reputation of a scholar long before he received his PhD. As Weinstein describes him, “Research is not often a term found in jazz literature to describe the activities of a musician, yet it fits Lateef’s career perfectly. He has relentlessly pursued musical knowledge for global sources. Nigeria provided the opportunity for him to research intensively African music at the source and within a community of African artists working on other media.”³⁹⁶

Describing his research activities in Nigeria Lateef states:

I was a Senior Research Fellow [at the Center for Nigerian Cultural Studies at Ahmadu Bello University]; that was my position. I had three obligations. First, I did research into the Nigerian flute, which is called Sarwa, and this was invented by Fulani herdsmen well over three hundred years ago... My second obligation was to teach research methodology to Nigerian cultural students... My third duty was to interact with the performing arts group there at the center, which consisted of African musicians and which included drama and dance.³⁹⁷

Finally as a result of his research he states, “There were Hausa, Ibo, Mugazawa, Yoruba, Nupe, Ibibio, and others. Each of the groups had its own rhythms, language, attire, and culture. Observing their cultural particularities helped me to understand the genetic inheritance of African American musicians. That is why Lester Young sounds uniquely distinct from Coleman Hawkins, though both played the same instrument.”³⁹⁸ This statement is in direct opposition to Blakey’s autonomous view of jazz development, which does not acknowledge any African influence, genetic or otherwise in the stylistic development of jazz.

³⁹⁵ Lateef, interview by Squinobal

³⁹⁶ Weinstein, *A Night in Tunisia*, 154

³⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 154

³⁹⁸ Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 130

10.4 HIGHLIFE: A POINT OF INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE

At this point it is important to make something vitally clear. Although I have been exclusively examining the impact West African music has had on the lives and careers of Blakey, Weston, and Lateef, jazz musicians and African American popular musicians in general have had an equally strong impact on the African popular musicians and their music. Because of the reciprocating relationship between the interaction of African and African American musicians it is necessary to briefly describe the West African popular music known as highlife and the connections highlife musicians have with African American jazz musicians.

Nketia states, “The American interest in African music is matched by a corresponding interest in Africa in Afro-American music.”³⁹⁹ With postcolonial studies becoming prevalent today the influence that Western music has had on Africa has not been overlooked. In fact, many Western pundits have criticized African musicians for taking part in ‘cultural genocide’ by incorporating Western musical materials into their music.⁴⁰⁰ From this argument we see the effects of Western neocolonialism on West Africa. Although often used to describe political and economic relationships, the term neocolonialism is appropriate when describing the continued hegemonic dominance of the West over former colonies. According to Kwame Nkrumah, “The essence of neo-colonialism is that the state which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and

³⁹⁹ Nketia, “The Study of African and Afro-American Music” 15

⁴⁰⁰ See Nketia, “The Study of African and Afro-American Music” *Black Perspectives in Music* 1-1, (Spring 1973) and Monson, “Riffs, Repetition, and Theories of Globalization,” *Ethnomusicology* 43:1 (Winter 1999).

has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside.”⁴⁰¹ However, in today’s postcolonial world of modern globalization, “it is impossible to insulate Africa from external influences.”⁴⁰² Popular music like many other cultural traits is equally vulnerable to Western hegemony.

Rather than criticize West African musicians for incorporating Western popular music influences, which West African musicians do for a variety of reasons, scholars should incorporate Western considerations into their studies, as West African musicians have incorporated Western musical materials into their performances. From this point of view, it is not the dominance of Western music forcing an acculturative process onto West Africa. It is a process of creolization in which West African musicians make a conscious effort to pick and choose certain Western elements to incorporate into their own music. In much the same way that Weston, Blakey, Lateef, choose which elements of West African music to incorporate into their jazz.

John Collins, a scholar who specializes in contemporary African music has identified some American influences in Africa. “Black influences from the Americas can be considered to have started coincidentally with the policy of returning freed slaves to West Africa.”⁴⁰³ Brazilian Samba was brought to both Ghana and Nigeria when black Brazilian slaves returned to Lagos, Accra, and Porto Novo. Therefore, there was a large Brazilian-Yoruba community in Lagos that produced a dissemination of Latin-American music.⁴⁰⁴ In Nigeria, samba drums and rhythms were infused into juju the local popular music. In Ghana, musicologist A.A. Mensah states, “the

⁴⁰¹ Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism*, (USA; International Publishers Co. Inc., 1966)

⁴⁰² Nketia, “The Study of African and Afro-American Music,” 11

⁴⁰³ Edmond John Collins, “Jazz Feedback to Africa,” *American Music*, (Summer 1987)

⁴⁰⁴ Collins, “Jazz Feedback to Africa,”

inherent samba beat of the dominant rhythmic pattern [of the popular Ghanaian music style, highlife] provides a visible link with the Latin-American spirit.”⁴⁰⁵ Freed slaves and stowaways returning to Africa brought small instruments like the concertina, bandoneon, and guitar with them to Ghana. These imported musicians and their instruments merged with local percussion instruments such as hand drums and thumb pianos in low-class dockside bars to create a popular style of music known as palm-wine music.⁴⁰⁶

Ronnie Graham also highlights the importance of returning slaves to the development of contemporary African music. “By the nineteenth century, West Indian troops were being stationed in West Africa while black Brazilians helped the Portuguese re-conquer Angola. Finally thousands of Africans returned to Africa as freed slaves carrying with them a hotchpotch of new and old world culture. Already ‘cross-over’ and ‘feedback’ was making its presence felt in the evolution of particular African styles.”⁴⁰⁷ Graham introduces another aspect of interaction between African musicians and African American musicians, sailors and military men. Collins agrees that, “Another New World influence on Africa was that of Afro-American and Caribbean sailors and stevedores who visited African ports in the nineteenth century.”⁴⁰⁸ These sailors introduced calypso and merengue to the Guinea coast. While in Sierra Leone the local version of merengue was known as maringa and became the national dance.⁴⁰⁹ Finally local African youths played alongside West Indian musicians in bands at colonial forts that performed popular West

⁴⁰⁵ Collins, “Jazz Feedback to Africa,” 177

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid*

⁴⁰⁷ Ronnie Graham, *The Da Capo Guide to Contemporary African Music*, (London: Da Capo Press, 1988), 16

⁴⁰⁸ Collins, “Jazz Feedback to Africa,” 177

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 177

Indian songs.⁴¹⁰ Like colonial interaction itself, Western musical influences on contemporary African music began on the coast and in urban areas. However, Collins states, “initially a coastal phenomenon, there has been a general tendency...for the high-class and more westernized [contemporary] styles to reach into the rural hinterlands, becoming Africanized in the process.”⁴¹¹ The Africanization process that Collins posits here can be seen in the creation of guitar bands and *konkoma* variations of highlife. American influence on African music was not limited to Latin America and the Caribbean. In fact, the Harlem Renaissance encouraged North American interaction with Africa and this interaction continued steadily throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

Throughout the Americas, despite unimaginable hardships, African music survived and thrived as a new hybrid with Western European music during slavery. Collins states, “This creative explosion crossed back to Africa, exposing Africans [on the continent and throughout the diaspora] to a multitude of creative sources, from which new syntheses emerged.”⁴¹² Collins continues, “Dance music and drama originally from Africa were adapted to the New World, creating an enormous impact there and feeding back into the mainstream of music in Africa itself. This double transformation, brought about by leaving and returning home, has created a truly international music-style in Africa, and yet one that is doubly African.”⁴¹³

African popular music has been one of the major benefactors of this intercultural exchange between Africa and America. Much scholarship on the music of West Africa tends to focus solely on the traditional forms of music found there, ignoring contemporary West African

⁴¹⁰ Collins, “Jazz Feedback to Africa,” 177

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 178

⁴¹² John Collins “West African Pop Roots” (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), ix

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 49

music. Annemette Kirkegaard has suggested that in present studies on African popular music, the music has been misrepresented. Broad generalizations have been used to describe African music as everything other than Western. The author argues that the musical characteristics that make African music different than Western music are overemphasized, enhanced and even imagined in order to magnify these differences.⁴¹⁴ Likewise, Agawu also criticizes scholars for inventing exoticism, difference, and an overemphasis on rhythmic complexity when comparing African music to Western music.⁴¹⁵ However, the similarities between African music and Western music far outweigh the differences. Many of America's most popular musics, jazz, soul, and most recently rap have significantly influenced African popular music.

Collins has noticed that, "During the twentieth century, African music has moved rapidly from its original form and function, through the application of industrial processing to encompass hundreds of external influences, in turn itself influencing the musical evolution of societies far beyond the continent."⁴¹⁶ Western influences have synthesized with African traditional music to produce a number of different African popular musics. One of the styles of African music most influenced by many different sources, both internal and external, is highlife. Looking at the development of highlife and some of its influential musicians we can see that its greatest contributors experienced and participated in a great amount of intercultural exchange with African American musicians. This interaction became a give and take that centered on the popularity of highlife in West Africa.

⁴¹⁴ Annemette Kirkegaard, "Introduction," *Playing with Identities in Contemporary Music in Africa*. (Finland: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002)

⁴¹⁵ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 55-62

⁴¹⁶ Graham, *The Da Capo Guide to Contemporary African Music*, 10-11

Highlife is a modern style of dance music that has become popular in many parts of West Africa. This West African contemporary music began at the end of the nineteenth century in West African coastal and urban areas. By the beginning of the twentieth century, highlife could be found in Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria; in fact, highlife was influential throughout West Africa reaching as far down the coast as Congo. Highlife is a blend of African, African American, and Western idioms.⁴¹⁷

Throughout the duration of the transatlantic slave trade, European colonial powers established forts all along the coast of West Africa. These forts were used to traffic slaves and other commodities, increasing the wealth of European imperialists. Commanders in British-controlled Ghana residing at these forts employed African musicians who formed brass bands. These bands used Western European instruments like brass horns, snare, and bass drums to perform English tunes by ear for the colonial high society. However, by the beginning of World War I, bands also played local popular music.

Highlife grew out of the high society party music that was played by swing or big bands, the popular American ensembles at the time, around 1920. Graham describes highlife as a fusion of indigenous instruments, dance rhythms, and melodies with Western instruments, and musical styles including regimental music, sea shanties, and church hymns.⁴¹⁸ American big band had strong influence on the development of highlife because of the popularity of big bands in Europe and America. Collins notes that during colonial times rags, foxtrots, quicksteps and minstrelsy introduced by white colonialists became very popular in colonial Africa around the turn of the

⁴¹⁷ Atta Mensah and Gregory F. Barz, "Highlife" *Grove Music Online*, www.grovemusic.com (Accessed October 13, 2006)

⁴¹⁸ Graham, *The Da Capo Guide to Contemporary African Music*, 76

century.⁴¹⁹ North American big band dance styles were not the only influences to reach Africa at the time. “African-derived dance-styles from South America and the Caribbean” including rumba, samba, mambo, and merengue were all absorbed into West African popular music before the second world war.⁴²⁰

There are three different performance style groups that aided in the formation of highlife: “the ballroom dance band variety for the coastal urban elite, the village brass band variety known as konkoma, and finally the ‘low-class’ rural guitar bands.”⁴²¹ The ballroom dance bands emerged directly from interaction between European colonialists and African musicians. These bands played in posh urban clubs for Europeans and upper class Africans. Admission to highlife clubs was very expensive and so only those who were living ‘the highlife’ were able to enjoy these bands; that is how the music came to be named highlife.⁴²²

The rural brass bands played a style of music known as konkoma. These bands were developed out of the desire of village people to hear the highlife music they could not afford to hear in the clubs. The rural village musicians utilized whatever instruments they could find, and as Collins points out, “When local musicians couldn’t afford to buy expensive imported instruments, they made do with drums, voices, and plenty of fancy dress.”⁴²³ This is nothing new, however, as African musicians have used their ingenuity to make do with available materials in traditional music for centuries.

The Guitar band highlife also known as Palm-Wine music has actually grown to become the most popular form of highlife. Guitar band music developed as a low-class variation of dance

⁴¹⁹ Collins “West African Pop Roots,” 49

⁴²⁰ *Ibid*, 51

⁴²¹ Graham, *The Da Capo Guide to Contemporary African Music*,

⁴²² Mensah and Barz, “Highlife” *Grove Music Online*, www.grovemusic.com

⁴²³ Collins, “West African Pop Roots,” 18

band highlife. It emerged from the seaside bars, where sea shanties were combined with African music. The instruments that originally made up guitar band highlife were the guitar, concertina, accordion, harmonica, and banjo. These instruments were much more affordable and portable than the orchestra instruments required to play dance band highlife. In the end however, the guitar became the main instrument of these groups. Its popularity throughout West Africa is due in large part to its affordability and availability.⁴²⁴

The close association between drama and music in African traditional societies is also present in modern African styles and therefore it is interesting to note that comedic shows in Ghana were probably the first to use a full “American” drum kit alongside traditional percussion instruments in their vaudeville type shows.⁴²⁵ Highlife is associated with a particular dramatic performance known as the concert party. In her seminal work on Ghanaian concert parties Catherine Cole states:

The Ghanaian concert party is a form of traveling popular theater that is a tradition of twentieth-century West Africa. Beginning in the 1920s African actors trekked the length and breadth of the British colony then known as the Gold Coast, performing comic variety shows that combined an eclectic array of cultural influences. Performers appropriated material from American movies, Latin gramophone recordings, African American spirituals, Ghanaian *asafo*, and ‘highlife’ songs. They wore minstrel makeup inspired by Al Jolson and played a trickster similar to the famous Ananse character of Ghanaian storytelling.⁴²⁶

This integration of highlife music with comedic acting was first done by E.K. Nyame in the early 1950s and was an instant success.⁴²⁷

During World War II American and British military personnel were stationed in West Africa waiting deployment. The flow of swing music to Africa intensified by the influx of

⁴²⁴Collins, “West African Pop Roots,” 32

⁴²⁵Collins, “Jazz Feedback to Africa,” 181

⁴²⁶Catherine Cole, *Ghana’s Concert Party Theater*, (Bloomington Indiana; Indiana University Press, 2001) 1

⁴²⁷Collins, “West African Pop Roots,” 38

foreign troops at this time. As a result, swing music as performed by Duke Ellington and Louis Jordan became immensely successful in English-speaking Africa.⁴²⁸ The introduction of swing music into Ghana by American troops led to the use of smaller dance bands, which replaced the large ballroom dance orchestras.⁴²⁹

10.5 INTERACTION OF WEST AFRICAN POP MUSICIANS AND AFRICAN AMERICAN JAZZ MUSICIANS

E.T. Mensah is considered by many to be the ‘king’ of highlife. Mensah began playing in highlife dance bands when he was a schoolboy. He taught himself to play the flute, and formed the *Accra Orchestra* with his older brother. Mensah credits his education in jazz as giving him the superior musicianship skills needed to become the most popular highlife musician in Ghana. Mensah states “it was Sergeant Leopard who taught us the correct methods of intonation, vibrato, tonguing, and breath control which contributed to place us above the average standard in town.”⁴³⁰ Leopard was a professional jazz saxophonist in England before establishing the *Black and White Spots* highlife band in Ghana, a group that Mensah soon joined.⁴³¹

After his formal training with Leopard and residency in his group, Mensah once again formed his own highlife group, known as the *Tempos*, in 1948. This group quickly became the

⁴²⁸ Collins, “Jazz Feedback to Africa,”

⁴²⁹ E. J. Collins “Ghanaian Highlife” *African Arts*, X:1, (October 1976) 64

⁴³⁰ Collins, “West African Pop Roots,” 22

⁴³¹ *Ibid*, 22

most influential highlife band in Ghana and Nigeria.⁴³² Mensah also took his band on a tour of other West African countries and was well received. This tour included stops in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, and Cote d'Ivoire. Mensah was a huge influence in the creation of modern highlife and he also developed an important relationship with African American musician Louis Armstrong.

Armstrong performed in Accra, Ghana in 1956. The visit to Africa was extremely important to Armstrong for many reasons; he was one of the first African American jazz musicians to perform in Ghana and he recognized the debt jazz owed to its African influences. Furthermore, Ghana was on the cusp of independence and his performances were part of the anticipated celebration. He stated that, "The West Coast of Africa is the spiritual home of many [African] Americans and the birthplace of the rhythms which became jazz."⁴³³ Armstrong's visit greatly influenced many highlife musicians, none more than Mensah. Mensah by this time had switched from playing saxophone to trumpet and was familiar with Armstrong's trumpet playing from gramophone recordings.

Armstrong was undoubtedly also influenced by Mensah who played a concert of highlife music that Armstrong attended while in Ghana. According to the Ghanaian *Daily Graphic* (May 25, 1956) after hearing Mensah perform at a club, "Louis Armstrong must have been surprised. He was pleased. He went up to E.T. and shook hands with him."⁴³⁴ Armstrong and Mensah also had a chance to play together at the Paramount club in Accra where Mensah's group hosted a

⁴³² Graham, *The Da Capo Guide to Contemporary African Music*, 76

⁴³³ Dempsey J. Travis, *The Louis Armstrong Odyssey: From Jane Alley to America's Jazz Ambassador*, (Chicago: Urban Research Press, 1997) 153-154

⁴³⁴ John Collins, *African Pop Roots: The Inside Rhythms of Africa*, (London; New York: W. Foulsham & Co. Ltd. 1985) 75

jam session that Armstrong participated in.⁴³⁵ Contemporary African music was not the only music Armstrong experienced in Ghana. Armstrong and his group 'The All Stars' "visited Achimota College where they were entertained by African traditional drumming and dancing."⁴³⁶ However, it was Mensah's highlife and its similarities to jazz that made the biggest impression on him.

Guy Warren, who would later be known as Kofi Ghanaba, also had the opportunity to interact with African American jazz musicians including Louis Armstrong. In fact, Warren's relationship with America and England greatly affected the development of dance band highlife. Warren is one of the best examples of a musician who embraced the intercultural relationship between African music and African American music. He grew up in Ghana and learned both traditional drumming and American drum set at a very early age. In 1939 he spent time in the United States and played with many well-known jazz musicians including Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk. Warren then returned to Africa to perform with E.T. Mensah's *Accra Rhythm Orchestra*. Warren was also the drummer for Mensah's *Tempos*, and his experience with African American jazz drumming gave the group an African American jazz feel. In fact, while the *Tempos* are ultimately considered a highlife group by the majority of scholars who have studied them, Royal Hartigan states, "the *Tempos* was considered by many to be the epitome of African Jazz ensembles."⁴³⁷

For the next twelve years Warren spent time in both Ghana and the UK playing in an assortment of highlife and Afro-Cuban jazz bands. During this time he synthesized a style of

⁴³⁵ Dempsey, *The Louis Armstrong Odyssey*, 150

⁴³⁶ Collins, *African Pop Roots*, 76

⁴³⁷ Royal Hartigan, "Ghanaba and the Heritage of African Jazz" *Annual Review of Jazz Studies* (1987-1988)

drumming that contained the characteristics of African traditional music, Afro-Caribbean music and jazz. Upon his return to Ghana, Warren brought back new ideas that were incorporated into Mensah's highlife style of music. Warren added Latin percussion instruments like the maracas, bongos, and congas, and he introduced musicians to calypso melodies that he had learned from playing in Kenny Graham's *Afro-Cubanists* in London.⁴³⁸

In 1953 Warren moved to Chicago and began to record albums with jazz musicians that combined modern jazz with African percussion. To some, Ghanaba, is also thought of as the spiritual father of Afrobeat, a musical style developed by Fela Kuti, a Nigerian who began his career as a highlife musician.⁴³⁹ After going to America and experiencing the jazz scene, Warren had this interesting statement:

When I was young it was jazz that dominated me as I was naïve and thought that was the thing. But it is the African music that is the mother, not the other way around. But I had to find this out the hard way. [The decision to change from jazz to Afro-fusions] was a personal one I made in my room in Chicago. I remember it well. I said to myself "Guy, you can never play like Gene Krupa, Max Roach or Louis Bellson, they have a different culture and they can never play like you." So I had to make the choice of being a poor imitation of Buddy Rich or play something they couldn't. I could play jazz well, but I possessed something that nobody else had. So I started to play African music with a little bit of jazz thrown in, not jazz with a little African music thrown in.⁴⁴⁰

While in the United States, Warren began encouraging American musicians to integrate African music with their own music. Max Roach states that Warren used to tell African American musicians, "that in order for African American music to be stronger, it must cross-fertilize with its African origins...Years later black music in America turned to Africa for

⁴³⁸ Collins "Ghanaian Highlife," 64; and Hartigan, "Ghanaba and the Heritage of African Jazz"

⁴³⁹ Graham, *The Da Capo Guide to Contemporary African Music*, 82

⁴⁴⁰ Collins, "Jazz Feedback to Africa," 189

inspiration and rejuvenation.”⁴⁴¹ This statement shows that Warren was aware of the important link between African music and African American music and that his cross-cultural integration of many different styles of African and American music was deliberate.

10.6 HIGHLIFE IN NIGERIA

There are conflicting accounts of how highlife began in Nigeria. Atta Mensah in *The New Grove* indicates that in 1934 the *Cape Coast Sugar Babies Light Orchestra* toured Nigeria and performed highlife arrangements of Yoruba songs, which were greeted with enthusiasm.⁴⁴² However Collins suggests that Nigerian highlife began as rural and urban low-class nightlife music. After that, Mensah’s style of highlife created a new generation of Nigerian dance-band highlife. Musicians such as Victor Olaiya were greatly influenced by Mensah and his jazz inspired style of highlife. Furthermore, Fela Kuti, a member of Olaiya’s highlife group, was also unquestionably impacted by Mensah’s jazz influenced form of highlife.⁴⁴³ Graham concurs with Collins; he states, “highlife arrived in Nigeria in the early 1950’s, following the successful tours of the country by the Ghanaian highlife king, E.T. Mensah. All leading Nigerian highlife musicians acknowledge their debt to Mensah and his *Tempos*, although it must be said that both Yorubas and Ibos had similar indigenous palm-wine styles on which to graft the highlife rhythm.”⁴⁴⁴ Palm-Wine music developed around the same time as dance band highlife in Ghana

⁴⁴¹ Michael E. Veal, *Fela: The Life and Times of an African Musician*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000) 49

⁴⁴² Mensah and Barz, “Highlife,” *Grove Music Online*

⁴⁴³ Collins, “West African Pop Roots,”

⁴⁴⁴ Graham, *The Da Capo Guide to Contemporary African Music*, 52

as well and stems from the same synthesized roots. The fact that Graham distinguishes it as separate from Ghanaian highlife, while the New Grove and Collins identify it as similar highlights an ongoing problem scholars have; namely, the necessity to label and categorize music. The music that each source identifies as early highlife music in Nigeria is also the same music others place into different categories. There should be an attempt by the academic community to attain a consensus on the terminology and labels that are used to define a musical genre; however, scholars are more concerned with breaking new ground and separating their work as independent from the work of others.

10.7 FELA AND WESTON

Jazz musicians and African American popular musical elements did not only influence highlife music. They also directly influenced Afro-Beat, a spin off of highlife music that developed around 1966. “The impact of pop music, particularly soul, also led to a new syncretic dance music called Afro-Beat, an Africanized soul created in the late sixties by the Nigerian highlife musician, Fela Ransome Kuti.”⁴⁴⁵ While Collins emphasizes the influence of soul music on Kuti’s Afro-Beat, his earliest work is influenced much more by ‘Blue Note’ Hard Bop music of the 1960s.

Fela is most often given full credit for creating the genre of African pop music known as Afro-Beat. Before settling on the name Afro-Beat, he had previously named his music ‘highlife

⁴⁴⁵ Collins “Ghanaian Highlife,” 65

jazz.’ Fela’s music diverged slightly from Mensah’s highlife because he overtly emphasized the West African traditional elements and African American jazz his music. While some critics claimed that his music contained too much jazz, he defended his choice declaring that he played African music since jazz was originally an African form of music.⁴⁴⁶ In fact, Afro-Beat may be the best example of the fusion between highlife, and American jazz and soul.

Fela began his musical career as a highlife musician performing with bands around Lagos. He was first introduced to American jazz, and Louis Armstrong in particular, when he toured Ghana. Many highlife musicians, especially trumpet players, were influenced by Armstrong partly because of his trip to Ghana, but more so because his early recordings were more readily available in Africa. However, Fela had the opportunity to study in London at Trinity College, a college known for its conventional Western music education, and soon he began to be influenced by more modern jazz musicians. Fela states “I played a lot of jazz in the beginning of my career because it had cultural information that enriched my mind...Coltrane, Miles, Sonny Rollins, that era because I found a heavy relationship between that music and my culture.”⁴⁴⁷ While he identifies John Coltrane, Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins as important musical influences, his early compositions more closely resemble those of Weston, Blakey, Lee Morgan, Wayne Shorter and the groove oriented music of the 1960s *Blue Note* Albums.

When Fela returned to Lagos from London in 1963 he organized a jazz quintet that played modern jazz in much the same style as Weston who visited Lagos the same year. As previously mentioned, Weston had several opportunities to perform with Fela in Lagos and the two were a big influence on each other. Like Weston, Fela had a great sense of Pan-African

⁴⁴⁶ Veal, *Fela*

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 41

solidarity. The horn players who played in Weston's touring band influenced Fela more than Weston himself, and around this time Fela began to play saxophone as well as trumpet.

Fela's development of Afro-Beat grew out of a desire to merge hard bop 1960s jazz, which was not very popular in Nigeria, with the much more popular highlife. As he continued to develop his musical style he also borrowed significantly from American funk, R&B and Soul particularly the music of James Brown. Fela went to the United States in 1969. He states, "I started using jazz as a stepping-stone to African music. Later, when I got to America, I was exposed to African history that I was not even exposed to here. It was then that I really began to see that I had not played African music. I had been using jazz to play African music, when really I should be using African music to play jazz."⁴⁴⁸ It is significant to note that Fela's statement here is quite similar to Guy Warren's. It's clear that both musicians rediscovered a dedication to African music after interacting with African American musicians and performing jazz in America.

10.8 BABATUNDE OLATUNJI

One of the most influential African musicians to make an impact on African Americans after coming to the United States is Babatunde Olatunji. Olatunji came to the United States to attend Morehouse College in 1950. After completing his undergraduate degree he moved to New York City to pursue a graduate degree from NYU. While doing graduate work he established a center

⁴⁴⁸ Collins "West African Pop Roots," 78

for African culture as a way to educate African Americans about their African roots. He used music, more specifically hand drumming and dance, to put on performances and lectures about West African culture.

While Guy Warren and others made African-themed recordings before Olatunji, it was Olatunji's *Drums of Passion* recorded in 1957 that really sparked a deluge of recordings by African American jazz musicians who incorporated elements of African music. Yet, despite the fact that *Drums of Passion* was immensely popular and introduced millions of Americans to African drumming, it is interesting to note that Olatunji was the only African musician on the album. The rest of the percussionists and all of the other singers were either African Americans or Afro-Caribbean.⁴⁴⁹

Yusef Lateef, who had a very close relationship to Olatunji, first met the Nigerian musician at the recording sessions for Art Blakey's *The African Beat* and Weston's *Uhuru Africa*.⁴⁵⁰ In 1960 Lateef began playing with Olatunji full-time. Talking about his time with Olatunji Lateef states, "for the first time I had to perform without a pianist or bassist in the group. It provided me with a lot of harmonic space and freedom. Olatunji's music also provided a wider appreciation for world music."⁴⁵¹ Lateef explains that Olatunji's recording *Drums of Passion*, "practically introduced the world to African musical expression."⁴⁵² Lateef became the musical director of Olatunji's working group, a sextet consisting of African and Afro-Cuban percussionists, an acoustic bassist, and Lateef playing flute, tenor saxophone, oboe, and a bevy of different hand-made flutes and reed instruments. The time spent with Olatunji reaffirmed

⁴⁴⁹ Eric Charry, "Introduction" to *The Beat of My Drum: An Autobiography* by Babatunde Olatunji, (Philadelphia; Temple University Press, 2005) 4

⁴⁵⁰ Weinstein, *A Night in Tunisia*, 150

⁴⁵¹ Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 88

⁴⁵² *Ibid*, 90

Lateef's instincts to incorporate traditional music and instruments, particularly flutes, in his own music. Olatunji states that he hired Lateef because Lateef was having trouble getting club dates. According to Olatunji "nobody was hiring Yusef at the time because of his affiliation with [Islam]. Prejudice against the Muslims was running high in those days."⁴⁵³ When asked about this statement Lateef said he couldn't remember a lack of work as being the reason for Olatunji hiring him.⁴⁵⁴ In his autobiography he states, "The experiences with Olatunji...gave me new confidence and I continued to record on a fairly regular basis throughout 1960."⁴⁵⁵ Perhaps Olatunji felt that he was doing Lateef a favor by hiring him during a time when Muslim musicians were being treated unfairly in the United States.

Olatunji claims to be the first musician to record what later would be called world music or world beat. He also claims to have been a major influence over popular musicians back in Africa. He writes, "I was the first one to record African "highlife" music with the popular dance steps. People like Sunny Ade and Ebenezer Obey later popularized juju music, but they did not come out of a vacuum. I had already prepared the way for them."⁴⁵⁶ Olatunji may have been a minor influence on Nigerian popular musicians, because of the recordings he made in the United States. Certainly he was not the first African musician to record highlife, and his presence in the U.S., far removed from the everyday interaction of musicians in Nigeria and Ghana, means that local musicians like E.T. Mensah, Fela and other popular highlife musicians of the day were as great an influence if not greater on younger African popular musicians.

⁴⁵³ Babatunde Olatunji, *The Beat of My Drum: An Autobiography*, (Philadelphia; Temple University Press, 2005) 198

⁴⁵⁴ Lateef personal communication, February 2007

⁴⁵⁵ Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 91

⁴⁵⁶ Babatunde. *The Beat of My Drum*, 199

Later in life Olatunji, who struggled financially, was introduced to the burgeoning drum circle culture of the Californian white middle class. He was welcomed into this society as a venerated master and began teaching at spiritual and corporate retreats where he emphasized the utopian spiritual nature of hand drumming. Departing from his efforts to bring a cultural awareness of West Africa to African Americans, at the predominantly white dominated drum circles emphasis was placed on general rhythmic properties of African hand drums and a simplification of those rhythms. This change in focus of teaching resulting from the need of Olatunji to find work caused tension between him and his earlier students as Eric Charry points out:

His work during his first three decades in the United States was with predominantly black communities interested not only in past connections, but also in forging new ones firmly rooted in Africa. Witnessing lost traditions being rebuilt only to see them transformed by others (predominantly white) using a rhetoric of universal rhythm and spirituality, one that was devoid of meaningful connection to Africa, may not have sat well with some of Olatunji's early students and troupe members and colleagues, and perhaps even with Olatunji himself in certain cases.⁴⁵⁷

While modern African popular musicians have been criticized for Westernizing West Africa, we can see from the many instances of intercultural exchange that African popular music is just as much an Africanization of Western music as it is a Westernization of African music.⁴⁵⁸ This creolization process has been one of choice, not of forced acculturation. The desire of musicians of African decent throughout the world to reconnect with their cultural roots and with other African musicians creates a meeting point in West Africa in the form of modern popular

⁴⁵⁷ Charry, "Introduction," *The Beat of My Drum*, 17

⁴⁵⁸ John Collins, "The Generational Factor in Ghanaian Music" in *Playing with Identities in Contemporary Music in Africa*. (Finland: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002)

music. The West African popular music juncture has re-influenced African American music and popular music around the world creating many layers of influence. One might think of this process as the re-creolization of creolized musics, meaning African American musicians having gone through a process of creolization at their inception are again going through a process of creolization musical elements are exchanged and re-exchanged throughout the diaspora.

11.0 CHAPTER 11: THE MUSIC OF THE BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT

Much of the music made during the 1960s Civil Rights movement relied upon the international relationships developed between African and African American musicians. This music became an important aspect of the Black Arts movement that ran concurrently with the Civil Rights movement. Along with interaction between African musicians and jazz musicians, recordings of African traditional music became more available in the United States by the 1950s. By this time, *Folkways Records* had issued more than a dozen recordings of African traditional music including music from the Yoruba in Nigeria and Ewe in Ghana.⁴⁵⁹ As a result, musicians began taking advantage of the accessibility of African music to use elements of the music in their own compositions and improvised solos. In much of the music of this period, harmonic progressions that had traditionally been used in jazz compositions were often, according to Floyd, “replaced by a more static harmonic environment in which pedal points establish key centers and modal scales...gave improvisers more melodic and structural freedom.”⁴⁶⁰ Wendell Logan also emphasizes the increase in the freedom of the music due to slower harmonic motion in his article “The Ostinato Idea in Black Improvised Music.” He states, “The tonal centers in this music usually have long duration...therefore, it is possible to craft ostinatos with a high degree of

⁴⁵⁹ Charry, “Introduction,” *The Beat of My Drum*

⁴⁶⁰ Floyd, Jr., *The Power of Black Music*, 186

rhythmic and melodic interest, unencumbered by frequent modulations.”⁴⁶¹ The use of ostinato techniques in jazz during the Black Arts movement is important because it provides a direct link to African traditional material. The ostinato is a harmonic/rhythmic device that is functionally related to the time-line bell pattern found in West African music. Along with the repetition of ostinatos, pianists began using quartal harmonies, using the intervals of fourths and fifths to create sounds that are associated with the vocal music of West Africa.

It should be made clear that jazz musicians were not listening to and drawing influence exclusively from West African traditional music. Jazz musicians have always drawn inspiration and borrowed musical elements from many diverse sources. During the Black Arts movement, African American musicians were also listening to contemporary European art music. Many of the same musical techniques—the use of ostinato, modal and quartal harmony—are also features of contemporary European art music. While the use of these techniques in jazz is more closely associated with West African traditional music, contemporary European art music was at the very least an influence that reinforced their employment.

African traditional musical techniques were not just applied to jazz randomly. Using the resources available to them, jazz artists were also able to capture the essence of African traditional music. According to Floyd, jazz musicians began to “bring about a more primeval ensemble sound, which, in its emotional character, recalls African ensemble music.”⁴⁶² He continues by stating, “The drums no longer merely ‘play time,’ but complement, color, and texture the lines and the instrumental combination.”⁴⁶³ Though it is evident from Floyd’s

⁴⁶¹ Wendell Logan, “The Ostinato Idea in Black Improvised Music: A Preliminary Investigation,” (*Black Perspective in Music*, 1984 12 no. 2:193-215)

⁴⁶² Floyd, Jr., *The Power of Black Music*, 186

⁴⁶³ *Ibid*, 186

statements that some perception of a primitive or ‘primeval’ Africa persists, it is just as important to understand his statement as it relates to the functional aspects that occurred because of the use of traditional musical techniques. Jazz during the Black Arts movement exchanged some of its predominant European influences—the most dominant being traditional Western harmony—and replaced them with African techniques, including an increase in polyrhythm, more diverse tonal textures and a greater sense of group collectivity. Floyd characterizes the music of this time stating, “The whole musical environment was repetitive, hypnotic, funky, and exciting, insinuating the entire black musical tradition, including its African manifestations.”⁴⁶⁴

11.1 BLAKEY’S EXTENDED WORKS

Two separate yet related waves of immigrants helped to ignite an interest in African percussion and hand drumming in the 1950s. These two groups were Afro-Cuban hand percussionists and West African popular musicians. Taking advantage of the popularity of Cuban dance music in the United States, Afro-Cuban percussionists and dancers traveled to New York City looking for work. These musicians brought with them knowledge of West African ritualistic music that had been retained relatively intact through the preservation of Yoruba, Fon, and Ewe religious practices in Cuba.

Armando Peraza Hernández, Carlos ‘Potato’ Valdés, and Cándido Camero were among a group of Cuban percussionists who were frequently used on African inspired jazz albums.

⁴⁶⁴ Floyd, Jr., *The Power of Black Music*, 186

Hernández, Valdés, and Camero were all born in Cuba and made their way to New York City in the late 1940s and early 50s to take advantage of the popularity of Cuban and Puerto Rican dance music in the United States at the time. Each of these musicians played with a number of jazz musicians in the late 1950s and 60s recording both African and Latin inspired jazz performances. Born on November 4, 1926 in the working-class district of Los Sitios in Havana, Valdés came from Cuba to New York City in 1954 and recorded with Blakey on his “Orgy in Rhythm” album. Camero was born in the small town of San Antonia de los Baños, in the province of Havana. He first came to the United States in 1946. He was a significant contributor to Weston’s *Uhuru Afrika* recording. The music these musicians played was close enough to that of West African musicians like Warren, Olatunji, and Ladji Camara to constitute a connection between the Afro Cuban percussionists and a much smaller group of West African immigrants.⁴⁶⁵

Aside from Warren, Fela, and Olatunji, Solomon Ilori and Ladji Camara also traveled to the United States and performed and recorded with jazz musicians. Both Ilori and Camara had a direct influence on the music of Art Blakey. In fact, in one of the interviews previously quoted he also talks about collaborating with African musicians despite insisting that the two musics are unrelated. “I had some drummers who were friends...I met Guy Warren. I met...Ladji Camara from Nigeria. He came over. He played with me for a while.”⁴⁶⁶ Ladji Camara moved to the United States in the early 1960s. Camara is responsible for introducing Americans to “jembe-based traditions from the previously underrepresented francophone countries of Guinea and Mali.”⁴⁶⁷ The jembe has since become the most popular African drum found in the United States.

⁴⁶⁵ Charry, “Introduction,” *The Beat of My Drum*, 4

⁴⁶⁶ Rosenthal, “Conversation with Art Blakey,” 276

⁴⁶⁷ Charry, “Introduction,” *The Beat of My Drum*, 12-13

The Nigerian-born Ilori arrived in the U.S. in the late '50s. A popular highlife musician from the Yoruba region of Nigeria, Ilori recorded a highlife album for *Blue Note Records* in 1963. Although it was uncommon for Blue Note to record an African popular music album, particularly one led by a West African musician, perhaps they were trying to capitalize on the success that Olatunji received from his recordings. The first six tracks recorded for this album were released on the original African High Life record in 1963. They contain a wide variety of palm-wine highlife tunes from the West African tradition. The remaining three tracks included on the reissue are extended percussion pieces of Elvin Jones collaborating with Ilori's hand drum ensemble. Ilori had an important impact on Blakey's *The African Beat* album. Later in his career Ilori went on to work with Harry Belafonte, Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela.

American born Louis 'Sabu' Martinez in many ways is responsible for introducing the community of the African and Afro-Cuban musicians to Weston, Lateef, and Blakey. Martinez was born in Spanish Harlem and he took over the percussion chair in Dizzy Gillespie's big band in 1948 after Chano Pozo was shot. In Gillespie's big band he met Yusef Lateef and the two became quite close. However, Sabu's first serious jazz gig was in 1946 with Art Blakey's Big Band *The Seventeen Messengers*. He developed a close working relationship with Blakey and provided a link between Blakey and Afro Cuban percussionists that Blakey would later work with. Sabu is responsible for introducing Blakey to Carlos 'Potato' Valdés and Candido Camero.

Around the same time Olatunji recorded *Drums of Passion*, Blakey recorded and released a number of albums focused on merging African music with jazz.⁴⁶⁸ Some pieces appear as lone tracks on otherwise traditional jazz oriented albums. Other works are grouped together and

⁴⁶⁸ Babatunde Olatunji's *Drums of Passion* was released in 1959, Blakey actually recorded some of his works before Olatunji.

encompass entire albums or at the very least African inspired suites that, at the time, filled one side of an LP. Blakey's African inspired output also ranges in the degree to which both elements of jazz and African music are used. Blakey's first extended African inspired piece for *Blue Note Records* consists of a lone piece on an otherwise straight ahead jazz album. This composition, "Ritual" features his sidemen, including horn players and pianists doing their best to perform on hand percussion. "Message from Kenya" was Blakey's first attempt at merging African music with jazz. This song is issued on *Horace Silver Trio, Vol 2*.⁴⁶⁹ On this track Blakey plays with percussionist Martinez. Martinez helped Blakey pick the musicians for his subsequent *Orgy in Rhythm* recording session.

Shortly before Blakey's *Orgy in Rhythm* he recorded *Drum Suite*, which occupied one half of the issued LP.⁴⁷⁰ The version found on this recording was the first take, as apparently they were giving the suite a run-through and ended up playing the entire suite through the first time with no hitches. This suite opens with a percussion piece called "The Sacrifice," which features a short introductory call-and-response from the percussionists led by Martinez and features an extended solo by Blakey. There is no melody presented in the traditional jazz style, as the bass and piano simply go directly into their improvised solos. The movement ends with the same call and response from the group. This is followed by "Cubano Chant" and features call-and-response with the piano performing the lead part and the remaining musicians singing the response. The prominent role of the piano in this piece gives the song a more Latin jazz flavor, and Blakey's drum solo in the middle of the piece is significantly shorter than the solo in the first piece. "Oscalypso" is the most Afro-Latin popular/dance music influenced of the three

⁴⁶⁹ Horace Silver Trio Vol. 2; Blue Note; 1953

⁴⁷⁰ Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. *Orgy in Rhythm*, Vol. 1, Vol. 2. Blue Note, 1957; Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. *Drum Suite*. Columbia, 1956.

movements. This final movement begins with a bass ostinato played with a slightly distorted electric sound. The percussion is significantly scaled down compared to the two previous movements providing more of a foundation while the guitar and piano take the more prominent solo roles. There is a percussion solo in the middle of this movement as in the other two, and though it is significant in length the gradual build in intensity is more organic than the two previous Blakey solos. *Drum Suite* effectively moves in a continuum from traditional to popular music in much the same spirit as a traditional Cuban rumba, which also moves from the traditional to the more progressive.

Blakey's *Orgy in Rhythm* features African and Afro-Cuban hand percussionists including Valdez and Jose Valiente on congas, Martinez playing bongos and Evilio Quintero on timbales. However it also features an array of African American drum set players including Art Taylor, Jo Jones, Specs Wright, and of course Blakey. According to Gourse, "Blakey felt happy and artistically challenged when working with other drummers and percussionists."⁴⁷¹ However he was often quoted as saying he was not happy with the recordings that included multiple drum set players because the songs often turned into contests to see which drummer could outplay the others. This cutting-contest atmosphere was contradictory to the goal Blakey had in mind which was a more communal and collective environment in which each drummer would add only what was needed to the music rather than trying to be in the spotlight.⁴⁷² In an example of the extent to which he had committed himself to learning the music of West Africa, whether during his Africa sojourn or not, Blakey confidently takes the lead on "toffi" singing in Swahili with a

⁴⁷¹ Gourse, *Art Blakey*, 63

⁴⁷² Curtis Fuller, Interview with Jason Squinobal, 2008

strong and powerful voice.⁴⁷³ There are so many drum set players on this recording that it is virtually impossible to discern what Blakey is playing. Aside from the drummers and percussionists Blakey employs a bassist, piano, and Herbie Mann on an array of African flutes.

For his album *The African Beat*,⁴⁷⁴ Blakey employs an array of African drums and hand percussion. He described this recording as the first opportunity he had to work with drummers from Africa. The recording is a blend of jazz with West African traditional rhythms and tonal colors in the spirit of highlife music. The album features compositions by African and American musicians, all based on aspects of West African (especially Ghanaian) music. On this album Blakey worked closely with Solomon Ilori to produce a recording that features an array of both traditional and highlife inspired pieces. The extent to which Blakey employs highlife material is a reflection of the influence of having Ilori on the recording date. In addition, Lateef participates on this recording contributing oboe, flute and tenor tracks to the work.

11.2 MUSIC AND POLITICS

Many jazz musicians in the late fifties and early sixties recorded music and voiced their opinions about political and civil rights issues. Compositions and recordings such as Sonny Rollins' *Freedom Suite*, Charles Mingus' "Fables of Faubus," and Max Roach's *Freedom Now Suite* are all songs with political and civil rights connotations, which African Americans could

⁴⁷³ Gourse, *Art Blakey*, 64

⁴⁷⁴ Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, *The African Beat*, Blue Note, 1962.

relate to.⁴⁷⁵ During this time John Coltrane recorded his famous suite, *A Love Supreme*. At a radio interview, Max Roach said “I heard many things in what Trane was doing. I heard the cry and wail of the pain this society imposes on people and especially black folks.”⁴⁷⁶ *A Love Supreme* is an excellent example of the music being created during the Black Arts movement that had a great influence over everyone at the time of its release.⁴⁷⁷

At the same time, Randy Weston composed and recorded *Uhuru Afrika*. Rather than provide political commentary on the strides of the African American Civil Rights movement, Weston’s culturally motivated musical suite celebrates the strides towards independence on the African continent and relates the anti-colonialist movement in Africa to the Civil Rights movement in America.

11.3 UHURU AFRIKA

As the civil rights struggle surged in the United States, African nations were slowly gaining their independence from the grips of colonialism. Monson points out that “The domestic civil rights struggle was consistently viewed as intertwined with the fate of Africa and anticolonialism more broadly.”⁴⁷⁸ Often overlooked, many of the independent nations of the Caribbean were also

⁴⁷⁵ Sonny Rollins. *Freedom Suite*. Oje. 1958; Charles Mingus, *Mingus Ah Um*. Colombia Records. 1959; and Max Roach. *We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite*, Candid; 1960

⁴⁷⁶ Quoted in Lucas Aaron Henry, “Freedom Now! Four Hard Bop and Avant-garde Jazz Musicians’ Musical Commentary on the Civil Rights Movement, 1958-1964,” MA thesis, (East Tennessee University, 2004,) 85

⁴⁷⁷ John Coltrane, *A Love Supreme*. Impulse Records, 1964

⁴⁷⁸ Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 107

gaining independence from their European colonizers at the same time. As Africa and its diaspora were intimately connected by European colonialism and New World slavery, likewise the struggles for civil rights in America and the struggles to gain independence in African and the Caribbean strengthened the ideology of pan-African connection with Africa and throughout the diaspora.

As a result of civil rights activities occurring throughout the diaspora, African American musicians began to seek out new sources of inspiration. Stemming from the bebop ideology of the African American jazz musician as an artist rather than entertainer, African Americans began to connect with and utilize European art music and traditional musics of Africa. Monson describes the interest in traditional music at this time stating:

Black Artistic expression in jazz also looked to the ancient past and religion as a source of cultural renewal, critique, and empowerment, often expressed in myths and rituals of an idealized African past...the turn toward non-Western modes of spiritual expression and ritual enactment in the jazz world was connected to an identification with both the anticolonial struggles of the emerging non-Western nations in (Africa and Asia) and the cultural heritage of the African continent in particular.⁴⁷⁹

What distinguishes the use of traditional music at this time from that of earlier jazz is the accuracy of the borrowed music, which was largely due to the availability of growing source materials. While there may have been an equal desire to invoke the image of Africa through music during the Harlem Renaissance and Bebop revolution, the majority of these examples are idealized caricatures of what Americans thought African music should be. From the late 1950s, African American jazz musicians began to have greater access to recordings of African music and, perhaps more importantly, they began to travel to the African continent and interact with African musicians on a more regular basis.

⁴⁷⁹ Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 20

As mentioned previously, Weston began composing and performing professionally during the Black Arts movement. His childhood influences up to that point had prepared him for the political climate, and his interests in African traditional music and culture flourished. Like Coltrane and many other jazz artists, Weston also composed and recorded an extended composition advocating civil rights and celebrating strides that had been made at the time. He called his political suite *Uhuru Afrika*. Unlike many of the other political jazz suites, Weston's composition was not restricted to commentary on the political struggles in America. Weston chose to dedicate his composition to the struggles and strides made by Africans throughout the diaspora. This does not come as a surprise, given the degree to which Weston was influenced by Garvey and his concept of Pan-Africanism. In fact, the main focus of Weston's *Uhuru Afrika* was the emerging independence of the new African nations, freed from the claws of colonialism.⁴⁸⁰

By 1960, seventeen African nations had gained independence. This was a source of joy and inspiration for Weston. He considered the nations that had emerged to be a source of inspiration for nations that were still struggling under oppression.⁴⁸¹ He also saw the independence of Africa as inspiration for the struggle for equality in the United States. *Uhuru*, Swahili for 'freedom' voiced a general sentiment in the 1960s and was used throughout the African continent as a call for independence.⁴⁸² The famed Ghanaian highlife band "Broadway Dance Band" changed its name to "Uhuru Band" when the bands proprietor revoked the use of

⁴⁸⁰ Weston, interview by Squinobal

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid*

⁴⁸² *Ibid*

the name Broadway.⁴⁸³ Thus Weston chose the title *Uhuru Afrika* for his first extended work merging West African music with jazz.

Although Weston had not yet been to Africa, his idea of a connected African people, despite their location throughout the diaspora, most certainly influenced his extended work. *Uhuru Afrika* was one of Weston's first conscious efforts to employ African music in a composition; it displays a creolized mixture of traditional African material and elements of the diaspora. Record producer Michael Cuscuna has reissued *Uhuru Afrika* twice. He shows his appreciation of Weston's *Uhuru Afrika* by stating, "So much music in the '60s used Africa superficially as window dressing, but this was the real deal—an honest, well-written, well researched fusion of jazz and African music."⁴⁸⁴

On November 16, 1960 Weston began recording *Uhuru Afrika* and his choice of musicians for this recording was very specific. Weston states, "I wanted to use a big band, and I wanted to use artists from Africa and artists of African decent. Jazz musicians, cats from the Broadway shows, a classical singer, a guy from East Africa, a guy from West Africa."⁴⁸⁵ He continues, "We wanted a rhythm section that showed how all drums come from the African drum."⁴⁸⁶ The rhythm section included Nigerian percussionist Olatunji, Caribbean drummer Candido, and Cuban percussionist Armando Peraza. It is clear from Weston's statements and his choice of musicians that he attempted to incorporate many different types of African music into his composition.

⁴⁸³ Graphic Showbiz *Uhuru Band • Echoes Of The Days Of Big Band Sounds*
<http://www.modernghana.com/music/4266/3/uhuru-band-echoes-of-the-days-of-big-band-sounds.html>

⁴⁸⁴ Willard Jenkins, "Freeing His Roots"

⁴⁸⁵ Laurent Goddet, "Interview With Randy Weston," *Coda*, Issue 159 (February 1978) 9

⁴⁸⁶ Jenkins, "Freeing His Roots"

As a result of Weston's work on *Uhuru Afrika*, he was able to bring together African, Caribbean, and African American musicians from very different cultures and used their common African roots to create a synthesis of Pan-African music. The use of African musicians from throughout the diaspora makes *Uhuru Afrika* an important composition during the Black Arts movement. *Uhuru Afrika* had an even stronger impact in Africa than it did in the United States. In 1964, the South African government banned Weston's recording of *Uhuru Afrika* because of its encouragement of freedom from colonial oppression.⁴⁸⁷

11.4 LATEEF

While Lateef did not produce any large scale African inspired works of his own during the late 1950s or 60s. He did participate on Blakey's *The African Beat* and Weston's *Uhuru Afrika* recordings contributing significantly to both. In an interview Lateef indicated that Weston's *Uhuru Afrika* recording was significant because it provided musical representations of the hardships that both Africans and African Americans had to go through during intense struggles for independence.⁴⁸⁸ Lateef also performed and recorded with Olatunji on *Zungo! Afro-Percussion* recorded in 1960.⁴⁸⁹ He continued to record his own albums, which were a mixed bag of African, Middle Eastern, and Asian influenced pieces. Therefore, although he did not produce an extended suite of sound dedicated to African American civil rights struggle or the

⁴⁸⁷ "South Africa Bans Recordings by Lena Horne, Randy Weston," (*Downbeat*, September 24, 1964,) 4. (Posted on Randy Weston's Website. <http://www.randyweston.info/randy-westonwelcome.html>, accessed 02/22/07)

⁴⁸⁸ Lateef, interview by Squinobal

⁴⁸⁹ Babatunde Olatunji, *Zungo! Afro-Percussion*, Columbia CS 8434 (Stereo LP) 1960

fight for the independence of African nations, he was intimately involved on the political activist level through the works of Weston and Blakey.

11.5 SUMMARY OF PART II

Blakey, Weston, and Lateef, became strong proponents for both the improvement of African American civil rights in the United States and freedom from Colonial rule in Africa and throughout the diaspora. All three musicians made close connections with African and Afro-Cuban musicians and collaborated on African inspired jazz music. However their interest in African music began when they were young children growing up during the Harlem Renaissance, a period of cultural rebirth in African American society that touched African Americans in Urban cities throughout the United States. Randy Weston states that this period of time was crucial for their development because there was “no generation gap between us and our parents. We listened to the same music our parents listened to and this was vital to our understanding of the role Africa played in the lives of African Americans at the time.”⁴⁹⁰ Although they spent their childhoods in different urban areas around the United States, all three were significantly influenced by the cultural and artistic strides made during the Harlem Renaissance.

The proponents of bebop—musicians like Monk, Clarke and Gillespie—acted as important mentors for Blakey, Weston, and Lateef as each musician honed their skills and

⁴⁹⁰ Weston, interview by Squinobal

entered the performance world. While Blakey and Lateef became immersed in the religion of Islam to get closer to West Africa, Weston immersed himself in West African traditional music. Weston also met with political delegates from Africa to discuss elements of different African cultures.

As professional musicians living in New York City, Blakey, Lateef, and Weston all participated in the Civil Rights movement in their own way. Weston sought to connect the civil rights struggle with the struggle for independence of African nations. Blakey, while maintaining the autonomy of jazz, sought to incorporate percussionists from West Africa and throughout the diaspora into his American-made jazz. Lateef, while participating on projects for both Weston and Blakey, immersed himself in the music of West African Islamic wind instruments as he sought to develop a distinctive sound for his music. Furthermore, all three musicians traveled to Africa and interacted with African musician. They experienced West African traditional music and dance performances and also met African popular musicians. They became aware that music throughout the African continent was diverse and distinctive, and that it included a rich popular music genre.

Their interest in both traditional and popular music from West Africa was cultivated by the increasing opportunities to interact with musicians from West Africa. Afro-Caribbean musicians, particularly from Cuba played an equally strong role in merging elements of West African music with jazz and cultivating a sense of pride in African heritage. The three groups of musicians—African Americans, West Africans and Afro-Caribbeans—congregated in New York. Seeking to make music together, these three groups found common ground by merging elements of traditional and popular music with jazz. In a sense they created creolized music merging new musical elements with old. Many of the most common elements, while present in

some capacity in the United States and even more so in the Caribbean have their origins in West Africa. At the same time, while there was a flow of influence from West Africa to the New World there was an equally strong flow of influence from North American music to both West Africa and the Caribbean and like wise from the Caribbean to both West Africa and North America. These distinctive yet connected influences created a continuous re-creolization of previously creolized musics and provided common ground for the interaction of musicians and the integration of music that took place in New York with Weston, Blakey and Lateef leading the way.

At this point I will turn my attention directly to the musical works of Blakey, Weston, and Lateef, I will identify what general and specific elements of West African music were used and how these elements fit into the works of these three musicians.

PART III: MUSICAL ANALYSIS

12.0 CHAPTER 12: INTRODUCTION TO PART III

Within this dissertation I have attempted to establish links, or intersections of interaction between West African musicians and African American jazz musicians. I have demonstrated the important role that highlife musicians had on shaping the use of West African music in American jazz. I have also discussed the spiritual connection between the Civil Rights movement and the independence of African nations in the 1960s. Before going further into the musical analysis of Blakey, Weston, and Lateef two things must yet be examined. First, it is necessary that I identify both general and specific characteristics of West African music in order to properly analyze what was borrowed and merged with jazz in the music of Weston, Blakey and Lateef. Additionally, whenever possible I feel it is important to identify the specific origin of that influence. Therefore, I will continue with a description of the general characteristics of traditional instrumental music in West Africa. For the most part, musical elements of specific West African cultures will be acknowledged and addressed as they become relevant and identified in the music of each musician. The second point yet to be addressed is the impact of colonialism on West Africa, how that impact affected West African music, and how colonialism has allowed scholars, specifically African scholars, to develop tools of analysis to identify the elements of African music when merged with other types of music.

12.1 THE NATURE OF CHANGE IN WEST AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Despite the efforts of many scholars, musicians, and music aficionados the predominant view of West African traditional music by Americans is still that of a music that has remained static and unaffected by outside influences for thousands of years. However, West African traditional music is not stagnant or static, in fact, it is dynamic and in a constant state of change, as the large and diverse continent of Africa and its people are also in a constant state of change. The view of Africa as a land filled with primitive and savage people was one fabricated by Western scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as they sought to understand their own beginnings. Scholars saw modern foraging societies in Africa as a living depiction of primitive life in Europe. They viewed these societies as devoid of history, having remained stagnant for centuries. Yet this is not the case: African societies have never been stagnant, they have always been in a state of motion.

Before European colonization, the people of Africa interacted with one another, and they traded much more than goods. They exchanged ideas, languages, information, music, dance drama, and art. Despite of the lack of a written history, evidence remains of change and interaction. It is through the transformation and development of music that some changes in identity can be observed throughout Africa. In this chapter I examine the nature of change in the music of West Africa, looking first at instances of change in pre-colonial Africa when change was much slower, and then at change after colonization, which was a much more rapid change. I will identify different factors that have led to change in West African traditional music, factors that have continued to keep West African traditional music dynamic, and that have also aided in the development of West African contemporary styles.

Innovation and change is quite evident in contemporary West African popular music styles and as a result, popular music studies have focused on the innovations and hegemonic domination of Western pop music elements. However there is also a close relationship between traditional and contemporary popular music in West Africa. As Ronnie Graham points out, “We now understand that every music is in itself a combination of tradition and innovation and that far from being an exception to this rule, Africa possessed a very high level of innovation within traditional structures.”⁴⁹¹

The term ‘traditional music’ gives the sense of a music that is static and unchanging, one that has remained the same for centuries and this is a term used to describe pre-colonial West African music.⁴⁹² In reality, West African music of all kinds is highly dynamic and innovative. “African music has historically enjoyed a high level of innovation,” states Ronnie Graham. “In a sense, all music in Africa is popular music.”⁴⁹³ While it may be argued that there is religious ceremonial music in some cultures that is performed more out of duty to the religious ceremony rather than because it is popular, Graham does bring up an important point. The vast majority of recreational West African music is transmitted through oral traditions therefore it must be popular to be disseminated and carried along through the tradition. If the music that was performed was unpopular then it would not continue to be performed and subsequently, it would become extinct from the tradition. Graham suggests rejecting the modern-traditional dichotomy in West African music in favor of John Collins’ concept in which all West African music exists

⁴⁹¹ Graham, *The Da Capo Guide*, 15

⁴⁹² There seems to be many different terms to describe the music Africans were making before any type of interaction with Western Europe had occurred. A.M. Jones and Nketia use the term Folk Music, many scholars use the term traditional music including, John Collins uses the term cultural music. Euba uses the term pre-colonial music. All of these terms identify the same musical activities.

⁴⁹³ Graham, *The Da Capo Guide*, 9.

somewhere on the urban-rural continuum.⁴⁹⁴ While this concept begins to take into consideration the varying degrees of contemporary and traditional music in West Africa, it suggests that all music made in urban areas is contemporary and as one moves towards rural areas the music gets increasingly more traditional. However this concept does not account for the fact that modern instruments and musical styles are not only found in urban areas but in rural areas as well. The process of modernization is really a product of colonization and globalization in Africa. This process may have begun in coastal urban areas, as Graham and Collins suggest, but has now become much more diffuse.

There are musical elements that are found throughout West Africa that give the music a general identity. These general characteristics are not confined to West African region; they can be found to different degrees in music societies worldwide. However, when present together, these specific elements serve to define West African music. For example during the majority of musical performances in West Africa there is hardly ever a separation between performer and audience bystander. Collective participation is a feature typical of many classless societies that lack occupational distinctions between performers and consumers. In this communal concept, audience members participate by clapping hands, singing, and dancing. Call-and-response, which is well suited to communal performance in general, is also prevalent throughout West Africa and is found in both vocal and instrumental music.

Many people emphasize the use of rhythm in West African music and state that it is the most important aesthetic parameter.⁴⁹⁵ Rhythm does play a primary role in West African music, as it does in all music, Agawu suggests that scholars overemphasize the importance of rhythm in

⁴⁹⁴ Graham uses the terms urban and bush, in describing Collins' continuum however I prefer the term rural rather than bush. Graham, *The Da Capo*, 1988

⁴⁹⁵ See Jones, Hornbostel, Arom, and Chernoff,

African music. He claims that Western scholars have invented complicated rhythmic techniques in an attempt to emphasize the difference between African music and music of the West.⁴⁹⁶ Furthermore, Euba has identified an emphasis that is placed not on rhythm, but percussiveness in West African music. He suggests that this may be the reason why there are so many different types of idiophones and membranophones in Africa south of the Sahara. He posits that “the emphasis on percussiveness in African traditional music is not only explained by the preponderance of percussion instruments, but because everything seems to be articulated percussively, including melody instruments and even voices.”⁴⁹⁷ It is perhaps the percussive nature of all instruments including those that are often considered non-percussive, which is often mistaken for an emphasis on rhythm in West African music. On the other hand Eric Moe argues that the emphasis on percussiveness is a natural consequence of wanting to articulate important rhythmic structures⁴⁹⁸.

The term polymeter, which is popular among some early Western scholars, is used to identify the simultaneous use of multiple meters in West African music. Agawu argues that the existence of polymeter in West African music is an invention of European scholars. In many cases these scholars have either misinterpreted an entrance of a rhythmic phrase because of a need for that phrase to start on a downbeat, or they overemphasize the ‘otherness,’ the difference, the ‘orientalism’ of African music when comparing it to the West.⁴⁹⁹ At the same time, polyrhythm, which is the simultaneous use of contrasting rhythms, is quite common in West African music. Polyrhythm is most often performed by an ensemble, in which a ‘cell’ consisting of twelve beats

⁴⁹⁶ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 55-62

⁴⁹⁷ Euba, personal communication, 10/23/2008

⁴⁹⁸ Eric Moe, personal communication, March 2009.

⁴⁹⁹ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 79-87

is articulated by different instrumental patterns into independent subgroups. Often a time line is clapped or played on an iron bell to provide a referential pattern. Yet it must be pointed out that polyrhythm is present in many different musical traditions including European music. To this Agawu adds, “What perhaps distinguishes the African usages [of polyrhythm] is the degree of repetition of the constituent patterns, the foregrounding of repetition as a *modus operandi*. If this counts as a difference, it is one of degree, not of kind.”⁵⁰⁰

African music is also rich in melody, timbral variety, and two- and three-part harmony. According to Agawu, many traditional southern Ghanaian musicians show a “preference for consonance at phrase ends (unison, octaves or thirds usually, but also fourths and fifths) and a polyphonic feeling based on streams of parallel thirds (or maybe fourths, based on what the Anlo-Ewe fisherman sing) and voice crossing at cadence.”⁵⁰¹ However, he points out that much vocal music sung in parallel thirds only appears to be parallel: the “actual production of those thirds involves many voice crossings.”⁵⁰² To the occurrence of parallelism found in West African vocal music Nketia adds, “The choice of interval is generally related to the kind of scale pattern on which the music is based. Parallel thirds are characteristic of societies that use a basic heptatonic scale, such as the Akan, Konkomba, and Builsa of Ghana...and the Igbo and Ijaw of Nigeria.”⁵⁰³ The use of parallel fourths and fifths are more characteristic of pentatonic traditions. Nketia states, “The tonal characteristics of the music of [some] Ghanaian societies are derived from [pentatonic and heptatonic] scales. Some sing using unison or in octaves or fourths and fifths. Most of those who use pentatonic scales have this tradition, while those who use

⁵⁰⁰ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 81

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid*, 7

⁵⁰² *Ibid*, 10

⁵⁰³ Nketia, *The Music of African*, 161

heptatonic scales generally sing in parallel thirds.”⁵⁰⁴ The use of parallel seconds has also been noted in Yoruba vocal music, though they also use sporadic thirds and fifths.⁵⁰⁵

Often there is the misconception that drum ensemble music dominates West African musical activity when in reality there are many different types of ensembles that play many different kinds of music. Along with this misconception is the belief that West African music contains no harmony. While the paragraph above gives examples of vocal harmony, the same use of parallel thirds, fourths and fifths is found in the music of pitched instruments including flute, xylophone, or trumpet ensembles. Furthermore one may identify static harmony found in many West African drum ensembles, where drums of differing sizes or tunings are used. For example, in his work on dúndún drum ensembles Euba states, “The vertical interaction of the pitches of the various instruments produce chordal effects which result in a kind of static harmony.”⁵⁰⁶ The static harmony of dúndún drum ensembles is generally found in the supporting or secondary instruments, while the lead drum performs drum texts above the tonal palette of the accompaniment. Euba continues, “The characteristic feature of the harmonic style of the secondary group is one in which different tonal angles of the same chord are revealed through a continual shifting of the chord.”⁵⁰⁷ Also present within West African drum ensemble music, and easier to identify, is cyclical repetition and the simultaneous use of many different ostinato patterns.

⁵⁰⁴ Nketia, *African Music in Ghana*, 109

⁵⁰⁵ Akin Euba, “Multiple Pitch Lines in Yoruba Choral Music,” *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, XIX (1967) 66-71

⁵⁰⁶ Akin Euba, *Yoruba Drumming: The Dúndún Tradition*. (Bareuth, West Germany: E. Breitinger, Bayreuth University, 1990) 271

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid*

The time line, a short but persistent repeating rhythm, is one of the most constant aspects found in West African traditional music. Nketia defines the time line as “a constant point of reference by which the phrase structure of a song as well as the linear metrical organization of phrases are guided.”⁵⁰⁸ The time line is often played on a bell, but it may also be played by other idiophones including hand clapping. Nketia highlights the important aspects of the time line in West African music, he states:

“Because the time line is sounded as part of the music, it is regarded as an accompanying rhythm and a means by which rhythmic motion is sustained. Hence, instead of a timeline that represents simple regular beats reflecting the basic pulse, a more complex form may be used. It may be designed as a rhythmic pattern in additive or divisive form, embodying the basic pulse or regulative beat as well as the density referent. Instead of a regular group of four notes, groups of five, six, and seven notes may be used in duple or triple rhythmic patterns.”⁵⁰⁹

This recurring rhythmic pattern serves as the identifying feature of many particular dance/drumming songs. Time line patterns are identified by many different names including bell pattern and phrase referent. Agawu identifies these as *topoi*, traditional themes or formula often used in literature. He describes a *topos* as “a short, distinct, and often memorable rhythmic figure of modest duration...[that] serves as a point of temporal reference.”⁵¹⁰ One of the most important elements of West African drum ensemble music is its connection to dance. “No one hears a *topos*, [time line] without also hearing...the movement of feet and the movement of feet in turn registers directly or indirectly the metrical structure of the dance.”⁵¹¹ It is important to understand the connect between drum rhythms, time patterns and dance steps because when synthesized with jazz, West African drum rhythms and time patterns are divorced from their

⁵⁰⁸ Nketia, *African Music in Ghana*, 78

⁵⁰⁹ Nketia, *Music of Africa*, 132

⁵¹⁰ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 73

⁵¹¹ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 75

relationship with dance steps. This separation will at times obscure the orientation of the time line.⁵¹²

While many time lines originated in specific communities intended for specific dances of ceremonies, they quickly spread into a “centralized, multiethnic, or detribalized space.”⁵¹³ Nketia states, “The areas of intensive interaction tend to follow fairly well-defined geographical boundaries which incorporate centers of economic or religious activities.”⁵¹⁴ After the colonial occupation of West Africa the “main catalyst for this migration [has been] interethnic contact through boarding schools, government bureaucracy, trade, rural-urban migration, church, cultural troupes, and radio.”⁵¹⁵

Nketia identifies that in the music of Ghana, “the use of claps arranged in phrases of duple-triple motifs or variants of such motifs is common.”⁵¹⁶ He gives the example of three quarter notes followed by two dotted quarter notes (see figure 1.) Nketia states, “A variation of this five-clap pattern consists of two sections arranged in such a way that the second section is shorter than the first. Instead of 6 +6 quaver units, the pattern is arranged as 7+5. The duration of the third clap is prolonged while that of the fourth clap is shortened by one eighth note.”⁵¹⁷ (See Figure 2) It is important to realize here that Nketia identifies one time line as a variation of another. This suggests that time line patterns in West Africa may derive from a few primary patterns and are closely related. In fact, this is what Agawu examines in his essay “Structural

⁵¹² See page 297 for a further discussion.

⁵¹³ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 73

⁵¹⁴ Nketia, *The Music of African*, 7

⁵¹⁵ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 73

⁵¹⁶ Nketia, *African Music in Ghana*, 83

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid*, 83.

Analysis or Cultural Analysis? Competing Perspectives on the ‘Standard Time Pattern’ of West African Rhythm.”⁵¹⁸

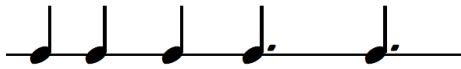


Figure 1: A common Ghanaian time line

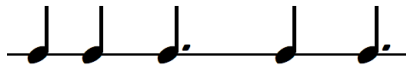


Figure 2: A variation of Figure 1

Agawu’s article on the use of the standard time pattern in West African music has led him to posit that many different time lines originated from only a few well-distributed patterns. Agawu states, “These connections lead us to imagine a limited number of historically sedimented fundamental forms.”⁵¹⁹ Agawu makes this statement in a passage in which he also compares the similarities of a popular five stroke West African time line with the well-known Latin American clave rhythm. Agawu cites Jeff Pressing’s analysis of the two rhythms stating, “if we allow some approximation and render the two patterns as short-short-long-short-long, then they are virtually identical.” Agawu questions whether the similarity is a coincidence or a product of transferring oral traditions to writing, and continues:

“The prospect of a deep parallel between the standard pattern in 12/8, which is generally—though by no means exclusively—associated with older, pre-colonial African music, and the clave pattern in 4/4, which is associated with modern, postcolonial or neo-traditional genres, not to mention numerous African-diasporic manifestations, is

⁵¹⁸ Kofi Agawu, “Structural Analysis or Cultural Analysis? Competing Perspectives on the ‘Standard Time Pattern’ of West African Rhythm”, *Journal of American Musicological Society*, 59:1 (2006).

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid*, 41.

attractive. According to this explanation, the two patterns are mere transformations of each other, the latter representing a ‘binarization’ of the former.”⁵²⁰

Agawu’s article is interesting in relation to this chapter because he suggests that the multitude of different time line patterns found in Central and West Africa originally developed from a select few archetypes. According to Agawu these archetypes may have been subjected to variation and embellishment as they were disseminated across Central and West Africa.⁵²¹ The most probable technique of variation that has led to the multitude of different time line patterns is ‘element fission’ and ‘element fusion.’ Agawu states, “The processes of dividing things up or conflating previously separate elements, while maintaining their spans or temporal extents, lie at the heart of African modes of rhythmic expression.”⁵²²

In the end, Agawu’s study is cursory and creates more questions than answers. For example, what was the process of dissemination that allowed the archetypes to be spread throughout West Africa? Is it possible that these archetypes originated in different places simultaneously, and, if so, why do they all have similar characteristics? However, if Agawu’s theory is correct then in the past there was a great deal of interaction that promoted change and development as archetypical standard patterns disseminated through West Africa.

West Africa has been subjected to many different outside influences that have contributed to the development of West African traditional music. However there are styles of music, particularly in rural areas, that have been less influenced by colonization. B.A. Aning states, “A sizeable portion of Ghanaian folk music has resisted the onslaught of popular Western, and

⁵²⁰ Agawu, “Structural Analysis or Cultural Analysis?” 38.

⁵²¹ Agawu cites Pressings work in this article. Jeff Pressing, “Cognitive Isomorphisms between Pitch and Rhythm in World Musics: West Africa, the Balkans and Western Tonality,” *Studies in Music* 17 (1983).

⁵²² Agawu, “Structural Analysis or Cultural Analysis?” 38.

Westernized music...The system of organizing music predates the colonial era and has persisted through the hundred years of colonial rule; it continues to be the predominant basis of musical organization in contemporary Ghana.”⁵²³ Aning’s statement should not be mistakenly interpreted as suggesting that these unaffected musical styles have remained static for centuries. In fact there has been a great deal of change in West African traditional music that is not associated with colonization and was very much a part of musical development in West Africa before colonization.

Recreational music and dance styles are more open to generational modification. These popular styles are less tied to tradition and are often performed by younger musicians and dancers who incorporate innovation by modifying both music and dance. Ritual and court performance are more conservative and slow changing, because these are linked to very old traditions. Older musicians who are more conscious of preserving the older traditions usually perform ritual and court music. John Collins states, “During the pre-colonial era novelty in recreational music was purely an internal African affair being the combined result of the continuous youthful re-interpretation and re-cycling of older styles, and of the absorption of new elements from neighboring ethnic groups contacted through proximity, trade, migration, and warfare.”⁵²⁴ Nketia also discusses change in traditional music through trade, war, and migration

⁵²³ B.A. Aning, “Factors that shape and Maintain Folk Music in Ghana,” *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 20, (1968)

⁵²⁴ John Collins, “The Generational factor in Ghanaian Music: Concert Parties, Highlife, Simpa, Kpanlogo, Gospel and Local Techno-Pop” in *Playing With Identities in Contemporary Music in Africa*,” ed. Mai Palmberg and Annemette Kirkegaard, (Stockholm, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, 2002.), 60.

in Ghana. He states that there was musical syncretism going on between the Hausa, Dagomba, Akan, Ewe, and Ga people long before European contact.⁵²⁵

One of the most important aspects of change in traditional African music is the dynamic environment created by musicians. Certain individual musicians acquire such a high degree of performance skill that they become innovators and influence a great many musicians who follow them. Aning indicates that individual musicians are very important in the development of musical styles: “the musician as an institution is therefore an important factor in the shaping and maintaining of folk music in Ghana.”⁵²⁶ Change in a traditional idiom may occur because of innovations made by a talented musician. According to Aning, there is a process that is usually followed: the talented musician “succeeds in establishing fame often by combining and crystallizing the various values accepted by his tradition...Then he develops new styles, all his own, but all rooted in the established tradition.”⁵²⁷ From Aning’s statement it can be assumed that innovation of this kind does not happen often and requires particularly talented musicians to initiate the change. However, change of this kind may also be particularly enduring, as influential musicians have a lasting effect on newly developing musicians. Finally, Aning says, “An ingenious musician may introduce original additions, but does not entirely abandon what he inherited.”⁵²⁸ Aning’s statement here shows that while change and innovation are important aspects of a musician’s development, retention of identifiably traditional aspects of the music is equally important, in order not to alienate listeners.

⁵²⁵ Nketia, J.H. Kwabena. “History and the Organization of Music in West Africa.” in *Essays on Music and History in Africa*. Klaus P. Wachsmann ed. Evanston; Northwestern University Press, 1971.

⁵²⁶ Aning, “Factors that shape and Maintain Folk Music in Ghana,”

⁵²⁷ *Ibid*

⁵²⁸ Aning, “Factors that shape and Maintain Folk Music in Ghana,”

Another type of change that occurs in West African traditional music is generational change. John Collins states, “The emergence of new styles of Ghanaian traditional music reflects the conflicts between generations, as in satirical musical commentary that criticizes village elders.”⁵²⁹ Collins suggests that youthful musicians can “ridicule members of the older generation, question priests and even overthrow chiefs” through innovative performances. Younger musicians who seek to add a personal touch to the music continually modify recreational dance drumming styles.⁵³⁰ By introducing Western products and aesthetics into colonization has played a large part in the rebellious nature of youths in West Africa. However, the desire of younger generations of musicians to separate themselves from the older generations and to develop musical styles and techniques that identify them as individual are not just products of colonial influences; this desire is a natural one inherent in all relationships between rebellious youths and older generations.

The fact that West African traditional music is transmitted orally also plays an important role in the constant change of the music. The music of West Africa is a vital, living, creative art form. In traditional performance situations audiences are usually familiar with the music and they follow along with anticipation. However, although the anticipated performance recounts and reaffirms the society’s history, there is the expectation that performances will be fresh and innovative every time. Subtle changes in performances of orally transmitted music keeps the preservation of history and the life lessons fresh and meaningful to its listeners. The creativity of

⁵²⁹ Collins, “Ghanaian Highlife,” 68.

⁵³⁰ Collins, “The Generational factor in Ghanaian Music,” 61

performers helps to keep the interest of the audience, which makes them more receptive to the history that is so important to their culture.⁵³¹

Change in West African traditional music has also been greatly influenced by interaction with non-African cultures. The people of West Africa have, of course, interacted with different societies for thousands of years. Evidence of this can be seen in the adaptation of Middle Eastern and East Asian musical instruments that have become integrated into traditional West African culture. For example the hourglass tension drum is originally thought to be from the Middle East, and the xylophone, possibly from East Asia. The most abrupt influences of change, particularly in West Africa, have occurred through interaction with Western European imperialistic powers beginning in the fifteenth century. This period of time, from the fifteenth century until the middle of the twentieth century is known as a period of colonization in West Africa.

In the early 1400s, European explorers began setting up trade routes along the West African coast in order to trade European goods for West African gold and slaves. The Portuguese were the first to arrive on the banks of the Guinea coast and were also the first to set up a slave trade route across the Atlantic.⁵³² However, before long the British, Dutch, Belgians, Germans, and French had all established imperial control along the western coast of Africa.⁵³³ Although official colonization did not begin until 1885 and lasted roughly seventy-three years, Agawu states, “Formal partitioning was preceded by several centuries of European contact with initially

⁵³¹ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 18, 25; and Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, 61

⁵³² Paul Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, 2nd Ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 36

⁵³³ Charles Johnson and Patricia Smith, *Africans in America: America's Journey through slavery*, (New York; London: Hardcourt, Inc., 1998) 6

coastal then later inland Africa, resulting in influences on religion, culture, and education.”⁵³⁴ Therefore, it is necessary in this study to take into account the full duration of time European imperialists occupied Africa and not just the official dates of political colonization.

Religion has played an important role in the development of West African traditional music. Islam and Christianity were both brought to West Africa and have affected change in traditional music to different degrees. The introduction of Islam into West Africa, which came via the Islamic slave trade before the fifteenth century, has significantly influenced traditional music performance. This influence can be seen in areas where polyphonic singing is replaced or dominated by singing in unison or heterophony. Islamic influence is also identified by the use of double reed instruments in the West African savannah. Islamic leaders allowed traditional musicians to continue to participate in traditional musical activities as well making the integration of new influences less disruptive.

The introduction of Christianity through missionaries played an even larger role in perpetuating change in traditional recreational styles of music. Christian missionaries were much more disruptive to the traditional practices of West African musicians than Islamic leaders were. Christian leaders felt that traditional culture had no place in Christianity, and this had a negative impact on the development of traditional musicians and subsequently traditional music itself. Collins has stated that a “clash between the older ‘pagan’ generation and the younger mission educated ones was a general feature throughout Sub-Saharan Africa in Colonial times.”⁵³⁵ Musical activity is common in Christianity and it played a large role in the missionary’s work. Missionaries passed along the concepts of Christianity in a way that African converts could

⁵³⁴ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 3

⁵³⁵ Collins, “The Generational Factor” 62

relate to, through singing and music making.⁵³⁶ In the process missionaries introduced religious hymns and choral music with conventional European harmony. The importance of religious music is acknowledged by Agawu who says, “We should not underestimate the potency of the hymn in the African reception of European music.”⁵³⁷

Along with the introduction of religious choral music and European harmony, the missionaries also introduced religious keyboard instruments such as the organ and the piano. “Western keyboard instruments first gained popularity in Africa as an almost indispensable aspect of church worship.”⁵³⁸ It is particularly important to understand the lasting effect that religion has had on colonial West Africa. “There are many Africans today whose affective investment in [Christian inspirational proverbs] is far greater—deeper and more sincere—than anything that might be awakened by a traditional funeral dirge or hunter’s chant,” states Agawu.⁵³⁹ This statement is significant because it indicates the extent to which Christianity has been integrated into West African societies at the expense of traditional religions. In recent years however, traditional music has begun to make its way into the Christian religious services. For example, attempts have been made to “create music in the traditional style for worship in the Christian church.”⁵⁴⁰

The acculturation of European cultural concepts and activities was encouraged and, in some places, expected of the indigenous people by the ruling European country. African converts were encouraged to learn vocal material and piano accompaniments of common

⁵³⁶ Sister Marie Agatha Ozah, personal communication, October 16, 2006

⁵³⁷ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 13

⁵³⁸ Akin Euba, “Towards an African Pianism,” 9

⁵³⁹ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 13

⁵⁴⁰ J.H. Kwabena Nketia, “Traditional and Contemporary Idioms of African Music” *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, Vol. 16, (1964)

Christian songs. Before long, Christianity, Western European religious music, and keyboard instruments could be found in many urban centers of colonial Africa.

There are very few traditional musicians and musical styles that have not been affected in some way by the influences of colonialism. By the 19th and 20th centuries, “novelty was injected into recreational performance from external rather than internal African sources, in short from Europe and the Americas,” states John Collins.⁵⁴¹ These changes came in the form of urban migration and formal Western education and resulted in a questioning of traditional and parental authority.⁵⁴²

Westernized education played an important role in the acculturation of European cultural traits. A European education curriculum was instituted into many urban areas. In missionary schools, “hymns were sung to the accompaniment of keyboard instruments.”⁵⁴³ Even today, one of the premier music institutions in West Africa, Achimota School in Ghana, first known as the Prince of Wales College, has a emblem that consists of a segment of a piano keyboard whose black and white keys symbolize harmony between Africans and Europeans. The school contains twelve practice rooms with upright pianos and a seven-foot grand piano in a small concert hall. Students learn Western classical performance and composition but also have the opportunity to explore popular and traditional musical avenues. During the time Agawu attended this school, in the 1970s, he noticed that African students made no distinction between the performances of West African traditional music and Western classical music. He states:

The self-consciousness with which these African students performed African traditions was no different from the self-awareness with which they played Bach on the violin or sang Vivaldi’s ‘Gloria’. The very ground of their cultural being did not

⁵⁴¹ Collins, “The Generational Factor” 61

⁵⁴² *Ibid*, 61

⁵⁴³ Euba, “Towards an African Pianism,” 10

correspond to some pristine, uncontaminated African essence, one that might be said to be innocent of 'outside' influences. No, their origins were irreducibly mixed, hybrid, syncretic, in-between, impure. And this is one of the enduring effects of colonialism.⁵⁴⁴

This account of the educational experience of school students in Ghana shows that students in the 1970s had been brought up in a community that was a synthesis of both African traditional culture and European hegemonic culture, in much the same way that African Americans fused African and American culture.

The adoption of a Western education system in West Africa has led to a decrease in traditional education techniques, particularly the apprenticeship of traditional musicians. Aning points out, "a comparatively small proportion of Ghanaian youth is fortunate enough to be given formal instructions in traditional music. The few are usually born into a family with a long musical tradition."⁵⁴⁵ It can be inferred from Aning's statement that this is also the case in other West African societies. To be sure, the incorporation of Christian hymns into the daily activities of school children affected the few who were also learning to be traditional musicians by infusing European musical aesthetics learned in school with the traditional music aesthetics being taught at home.

Due to colonization and the burgeoning of an international music industry that developed in the beginning of the twentieth century, "The music of Africa has not only sacrificed variety and spontaneity on the altar of commercial success but...economic well-being of the industry in Africa, and the options open to it, have also been adversely affected by the wider relationship between Africa and the western world."⁵⁴⁶ Although Graham sees the spread of African music around the world through globalization as a positive occurrence, he feels that it is necessary to

⁵⁴⁴ Kofi Agawu *Representing African Music*, 13-14

⁵⁴⁵ Aning, "Folk Music in Ghana,"

⁵⁴⁶ Graham, *The Da Capo*, 14

point out that “the continent of Africa has been so exploited over the last 500 years that it would be hypocritical to suggest that music has somehow been exempted from the forces which have shaped the overall social, political, and economic development of the continent.”⁵⁴⁷ There is little doubt that colonization has had an immense impact on traditional cultural elements in West Africa. Music has been affected most obviously by the merging of Western musical materials with traditional musical materials to create an ever-expanding genre of West African contemporary music.

12.2 THE TRANSITION FROM TRADITIONAL DRUMMING TO POPULAR DRUMMING

West African popular music contains a large amount of traditional musical elements, and for this reason it is interesting and worthwhile to investigate how West African popular music has utilized traditional styles. One of the first styles of popular music to develop in West Africa was highlife. As described in chapter ten, highlife first developed on the Fante coast where European colonialist built forts as early as 1482. The Fante had their own indigenous forms of dance and recreational music; however, in the port towns that grew up around European forts, Fante music was particularly susceptible to European influences. These influences included military music and Western European popular songs. Still, African melodic material played an equally important role in the formation of highlife. Kru sailors known for their singing and guitar playing, which is distinguished by the use of only the thumb and first finger, greatly

⁵⁴⁷ Graham, *The Da Capo*, 14

influenced early highlife. In fact, a Kru sailor taught one of the earliest well-known Akan highlife guitarists, Kwame ‘Sam’ Asare how to play his guitar.⁵⁴⁸

By the beginning of twentieth century, musical elements from Europe, the West Indies, America, and neighboring African countries all contributed to affect traditional Fante recreational dance drumming styles like *Adakim*, *Nuyen*, *Toke*, and *Osibi*.⁵⁴⁹ This influence eventually led to hybrid dance music styles, one of the most well known, *Osibisaba*, is generally recognized as the earliest form of highlife. However *Osibisaba* is only one of many recreational dance styles that has been influenced by Western elements and can be classified as “proto-highlife.”⁵⁵⁰ Collins identifies local Ga dances such as *Ashiko* and *Timo*, Liberian Dogomba guitar songs, and Goombey music “brought to Ghana by Ga artisans returning from Nigeria and the Cameroons,” as all being proto-highlife dance music.⁵⁵¹

Although there is undeniable Western influence in highlife, the music retains many features found in traditional Ghanaian music. The rhythmic and percussive aspect of highlife seems to be the elements most associated with traditional music. As Nketia points out, “the basis of rhythms of West African highlife...is very close to forms in West African traditional music.”⁵⁵² However there are other traditional musical elements also used to create highlife. Collins states that, “both musical forms include dance, and in fact highlife became popular precisely because its acculturated melodies and rhythms fit into existing local dance patterns. It is notable that the dance used in the *Odonso* style of highlife is identical to the traditional Akan

⁵⁴⁸ Collins, “Ghanaian Highlife,” 62

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 62

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid*

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid*

⁵⁵² Nketia, “Traditional and Contemporary Idioms of African Music”

Adowa.”⁵⁵³ Aning, also adds that “the wave of cultural revivalism taking place in folk music in Ghana is reflected in the ensembles of some popular dance bands.” These bands use traditional Ghanaian drums like the *atumpun* and the *donno*, and they have also begun to use more traditional melodies in their repertoire.⁵⁵⁴

In his dissertation for Wesleyan University, Royal Hartigan looks at the intercultural relationship between West African percussionists and African American percussionists through a series of interviews and discussions involving Ghanaian master drummer and dancer Freedman Donkor, master drummer Abraham Adzenyah, and African American drum set player Edward Blackwell. This study is significant in the research of highlife origins because Hartigan explores the type of relationships that occur when traditional rhythms are performed on the drum set during highlife performances.

Hartigan’s interviewees Donkor and Adzenyah identify traditional music that has had a great influence on the development of highlife, in particular the work songs performed by fisherman in the Ga and Fante areas of southern coastal Ghana.⁵⁵⁵ Both Adzenyah and Donkor emphasize the West African source and identity of highlife despite the use of Westernized instruments. Donkor states that, “song melodies and lyrics, tunings, rhythms, and playing style are distinctly from the work song rhythms of Ga and Fante fisherman.”⁵⁵⁶ Adzenyah and Donkor also point out that it was the Europeans who found these songs so impressive and encouraged

⁵⁵³ Collins, “Ghanaian Highlife,” 100

⁵⁵⁴ Aning, “Folk Music in Ghana,”

⁵⁵⁵ Royal Hartigan “Blood Drum Spirit: Drum Languages of West Africa, African-American, Native America, Central Java, and South India,” PHD Dissertation, Wesleyan University, (1986).

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

brass band musicians to incorporate these elements into their brass band music.⁵⁵⁷ (Collins seems to suggest that it was the initiative of locals who encouraged military band musicians to incorporate local musical elements into their performances of European music.)

African pop music is so dependent on traditional material that many scholars identify the genre as neo-folk or neo-traditional music. Collins is one of those scholars. He identifies this genre of music as neo-folk and not as popular music because many of the traditional forms of African music are also popular. He says “Ghanaian highlife, the earliest significant form of West African neo-folk music...fuses traditional Akan dance rhythms and melodies with European instruments and harmonies.”⁵⁵⁸

The term neo-folk come from the writing of A.M. Jones who first used the term to discuss highlife and *makwaya*, a popular music common in Rhodesia.⁵⁵⁹ This term is also used by Nketia to discuss the development of new West African music in Ghana.⁵⁶⁰ The term neo-traditional, which has been used synonymously with neo-folk, seems to come from the writings of Gerhard Kubik who investigated popular music in East Africa.⁵⁶¹ Both Jones and Kubik published their findings on African popular music in the early 1960s. According to the concepts posited by Jones and Kubik, neo-traditional music is the merging of traditional music with Western popular music. The result of this merger is music that has become modern African popular music.

⁵⁵⁷ Hartigan “Blood Drum Spirit”

⁵⁵⁸ Collins, “Ghanaian Highlife,” 62

⁵⁵⁹ A.M. Jones, *Studies in African Music*, Vol.1., London: Oxford University Press, 1959.

⁵⁶⁰ Nketia, “Traditional and Contemporary Idioms of African Music”

⁵⁶¹ Gerhard Kubik, “Neo-Traditional Popular music in East Africa Since 1945,” *Popular Music: Folk or Popular? Distinctions, Influences, Continuities*, Vol.1, (1981).

In contrast, Euba argues that any musical tradition that uses Western musical instruments or materials, such as highlife, must be considered modern African music and not neo-traditional. According to Euba, neo-traditional is a term that describes the development of new forms of African traditional music without the influence of Western musical material or instruments. While it is difficult to imagine the development of a new West African music style that is not in some way influenced by a Western presence in Africa, Euba gives the example of combining traditional music from Nigeria such as Yoruba *dùndún* music, with a traditional music from Ghana, perhaps *adowa*, to create a neo-traditional form that incorporates elements of both traditions.⁵⁶² In this way a new tradition would be created that contains only traditional material from Nigeria and Ghana, not the West; again however, with the widespread distribution of Western influenced music it is very difficult to imagine West African musicians, even traditional ones, who have not been influenced by the West.

Nketia seems to hold the same ideas about neo-traditional music as Kubik and Jones. He suggests that while some people may hope that new styles of music in Ghana may emerge naturally out of the traditional forms this has generally not been the case. As Nketia points out, “The musician interested in creating a new idiom of music is the product of a different kind of cultural situation from that of his forefathers.”⁵⁶³ In fact, Nketia’s statement suggests that due to the occupation of Ghana by the British throughout the colonial period, it may be impossible to expect new traditional styles to develop without some residual influence of colonialism.

Putting aside the seemingly problematic term neo-traditional for the moment, if the influence of West African popular music is taken into account as an influence on traditional

⁵⁶² Euba, personal communication, 10/14/2007

⁵⁶³ Nketia, “Traditional and Contemporary Idioms of African Music”

African music, then new styles of traditional music have developed. As Collins states, “African traditional music was and is constantly being created and re-created, both affecting the growth of popular music-styles and in turn being affected by them.”⁵⁶⁴ Elements of previously existing folk music are often the basis for other types of new traditional music.

One of the most recent examples of a new folk music style is *kpanlogo*. *Kpanlogo* is a style of dance music that began in the 1960s that is a product of dance-band highlife merged local drumming.⁵⁶⁵ Collins cautions readers that, “the claim that anything in Africa that sounds cultural [traditional] must be ancient and anonymous is an over-simplification that separates the actual, individual creators from their works.”⁵⁶⁶ The creator of *kpanlogo* is Otoo Lincoln. Lincoln and other Ga youths from Accra “merged the old Ga *kolomashie* dance with elements of Western pop and *oge* (a Liberian seaman’s percussion music popular with Ga.)”⁵⁶⁷ Although there are elements of highlife music in this new folk music, the music is played on indigenous instruments, and functions as an indigenous dance style would function.

In this chapter I have attempted to examine the nature of change in West African traditional music. In an attempt to give a cogent example I have focused primarily on change in Ghana and the transformation of traditional drumming techniques from dance/drumming styles to their implementation in highlife and back again. It should be understood that traditional music throughout the continent has undergone change that in some respects is similar to what I have described and in other respects quite different. Particularly in West Africa, the nature of change in traditional drumming has been similar to what I have described here. Above all else it should

⁵⁶⁴ Collins, “West African Pop Roots,” 42

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 43.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 43

⁵⁶⁷ John Collins, “The Generational Factor in Ghanaian Music”

be understood that West African traditional music is not stagnant or isolated; on the contrary it is at times intercultural and always dynamic. While many societies maintain distinctly different musical styles and idioms, there has been significant interaction between societies and innovation among African musicians. One of the major effects colonialism had on West Africa in regards to music was the acculturation of Western musical elements into societies that were particularly coastal urban areas. However, rather than looking at colonial influences on traditional cultures as simply destructive, scholars should see these influences as part of the process that has added to the rich tradition that modern West Africa can now claim.

12.3 INTRODUCTION TO MUSICAL TRANSCRIPTIONS

The short musical examples and full transcriptions presented in this musical analysis section are notated using the common Western notation system. It is quite common to notate jazz using Western notation with added expressions and articulation symbols in order to indicate specific timbral and special effects found in jazz. These added expressions and symbols are becoming more commonplace as jazz composers and solo transcribers prepare manuscripts for publication. However some of these expressions and symbols may not be familiar to those readers who have not read jazz notation. Some of the expressions and symbols include:

Different kinds of Scoops:

Scooping during the duration of the note:



Scooping from one note to the next:



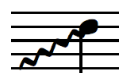
Scooping up into the note:



Falling off of a note:



Glissando into a note:



Sliding from one note to another:



Figure 3: Jazz expressions and symbols

Other wind instrument expressions include flutter tongue, growling, and slap tongue, and are indicated by writing the intended expression above the note. For Example:

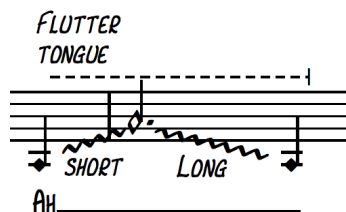


Figure 4: flutter tongue and slap tongue

It has been my practice to represent West African musical material with Western notation. There are those who argue that the Western notation system is unsuitable for representing West African music because it lacks the necessary symbols to accurately represent the music. However it must be pointed out that all music endures inadequacies of notation systems. If one argues that West African music suffers from the use of Western notation then it must also be argued that jazz and European classical music also suffer from Western notation. “The problem of notation is in this sense a universal one,” states Agawu.⁵⁶⁸ He emphasizes the need for supplementary knowledge, “a further set of signs set in motion by the process of interpretation.”⁵⁶⁹

This supplementary knowledge often carried orally or informally, is in the possession of many carriers of traditions. To load notation with more signs, or to introduce a new sign system altogether in the interests of descriptive precision or exhaustiveness, is, in effect to reduce the size of the supplement, perhaps to deny the role of the supplement, and with that, the creative role of the performer or interpreter.⁵⁷⁰

Therefore it is important to keep notation readable while including only what is of most importance to the attempts of description.

Locke also argues for the use of Western music staff notation for his transcriptions of West African traditional music stating, “Despite its historical association with Western music, staff notation can be regarded as a culturally neutral system for the visual representation of music. It merely is a widely known, highly articulated medium of musical communication.”⁵⁷¹ Yet there are some musical traits that are not adequately shown by conventional staff notation

⁵⁶⁸ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 64

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 64-65

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 65

⁵⁷¹ Locke, *Drum Damba*, 38

and in all situations it is necessary to listen to the audio recording of a musical example therefore I have included time markers for most musical examples.

I also notate relative tones of the drums when appropriate, as a way to give an impression of their melodic and timbral contour. As Locke indicates, “Although the notation does not describe the exact pitch of the [drum] tones, the spatial path of the note heads does show the general melodic and timbral contour of their phrases.”⁵⁷²

For those who would question the time signatures and bar lines utilized in the musical examples, I again reference Locke who separates musical time into measures of equal duration in his transcriptions and analysis of Ewe *Gahu* music. As explanation he states, “Measures (and bar lines) are meant to function as a steady referent to help players [and readers] know where they are within the flow of time.”⁵⁷³ Although Locke provides his transcriptions for students to learn to play *Gahu*, consistent equal-distant measures are used in my transcriptions for the same reason, to make the music easier to follow for the reader.

For his drum notation Locke uses a special tablature where specific drum strokes are indicated by different spaces on the staff in order to best describe to the student performer how to perform a specific drum part. My own transcriptions are not concerned with specific hand patterns or drum strokes; rather, I will use the staff as a way to indicate relative pitch relations between drums. For example if an hourglass tension drum is playing then the high pitched tones will be notated on the top line of the staff, the low pitched tones on the bottom line of the staff, and middle tones will be notated on the middle line of the staff. In an attempt to represent the different kinds of timbres that drums and other idiophones are able to produce, I have used

⁵⁷² Locke, *Drum Damba*, 40

⁵⁷³ Locke, *Drum Gahu*, 33

different kinds of note heads to signify different timbres produced by drums in conjunction with staff lines to indicate tone.

Drum Legend

The diagram illustrates the musical notation for various drums and percussion instruments, organized into six rows. Each row shows a staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The notation uses different note heads and stems to represent different timbres and playing techniques.

- DOUBLE BELL:** Shows four notes: an open low tone (half note), a muted low tone (quarter note), an open high tone (quarter note), and a muted high tone (quarter note).
- HAND SHAKER:** Shows one note: an open tone played with hand (half note).
- GOURD SHAKER:** Shows two notes: an open tone played on knee (half note) and an open tone played with hand (quarter note).
- HAND DRUM:** Shows four notes: an open low tone (half note), a muted low tone (quarter note), an open high tone (quarter note), and a muted high tone (quarter note).
- HOURLASS TENSION DRUM:** Shows six notes: an open low tone (half note), a muted low tone (quarter note), an open middle tone (quarter note), a muted middle tone (quarter note), an open high tone (quarter note), and a muted high tone (quarter note).
- DRUM SET:** Shows eight notes: an open tone snare (half note), a floor tom (quarter note), a high tom (quarter note), a snare cross stick (quarter note), a ride cymbal (bell) (quarter note), a hi-hat with stick (quarter note), a hi-hat with foot (quarter note), and a bass drum (quarter note).

Figure 5: Drum Legend

13.0 CHAPTER 13: THE MUSIC OF RANDY WESTON: INTERCULTURAL MUSICAL SYNTHESIS

The concept of borrowing from one music culture to enhance another is not a new concept but it plays an important role in the music of Weston, Blakey and Lateef. Euba has established a systematic approach to the study of intercultural relationships in a field he calls Intercultural Musicology.⁵⁷⁴ Many of the concepts espoused in Intercultural Musicology have been developed as a result of interaction between Africans and Europeans during the time of colonization in Africa. In his extensive work on the subject of intercultural musicology, Euba identifies two kinds of intercultural creative activity. One occurs when composers, or improvisers integrate elements of two or more cultures into compositions. The second occurs through performance, where the “music and the performer originate from different cultures.”⁵⁷⁵ Both forms of this intercultural activity took place during colonial times and continued after West African countries gained their independence.

The majority of West African colonies had gained their independence by the beginning of 1970. However, the colonization of West Africa had a permanent effect on the indigenous people. Alongside movements towards preserving and retaining traditional practices of religion and the arts, West Africans continue to practice Christianity and the Western European musical

⁵⁷⁴ Euba personal communication 2006

⁵⁷⁵ Akin Euba, “Intercultural expressions in Neo-African Art Music” *Essays on African Music 2: Intercultural Perspectives*, (Bayreuth: Eckhard Breitingner, 1989), 117

activities they learned along with it. Once colonization ended, African musicians, primarily those who grew up in urban areas and were most affected by colonial powers, continued to interact with their European colonial countries well after the end of colonization. Promising musicians attended European music schools and received training in Western European classical music.

Some of these musicians began to gain recognition for their compositions in Western art music. Some of the most well known Nigerian composers of Western classical music are Fela Sowande (1905-1987), T.K. Ekundayo Philips (1884-1969), Akin Euba (b. 1935), Ayo Bankole (1935-1976), and Joshua Uzoigwe (b.1946).⁵⁷⁶ Nigeria was a colony of Great Britain and all of these composers at one point in their career received formal training in the United Kingdom. They learned and honed their skills in the techniques of Western European music, and began to compose in a Western classical music style. However, Pedro Aponte suggests, “From the point of view of postcolonial theory, what [African] composers intend to do with [the language of Western classical music,] is to use colonial elements, in this case piano, to produce a traditional musical discourse that will allow Africa to confront the Western former colonizer, on its own terms.”⁵⁷⁷ It should be noted that this desire to ‘confront’ the former colonizer in West Africa shares a kinship with the desire of African Americans to present works of art that held up under European American standards during the Harlem Renaissance movement.

⁵⁷⁶ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, xv

⁵⁷⁷ Pedro R. Aponte, “Confronting Otherness: African Pianism as a Postcolonial Discourse” *Intercultural Musicology* 2/1-2 (October 2000), 16

13.1 AFRICAN PIANISM—INTERCULTURAL MUSICAL SYNTHESIS

In order to identify African elements integrated into the music of Randy Weston, I will utilize the concept of African pianism introduced to me by Euba through his work in creative and intercultural musicology. Euba identifies the activity of merging elements of African music with Western classical music as creative musicology. According to Euba, creative musicology merges musicological research with compositional practices so that musical information gathered through fieldwork is utilized as part of a musical composition. Thus, composers who actively seek to merge elements from distinct cultures participate in creative musicology. Euba cites Béla Bartók as a prime example of a creative musicologist; Bartók frequently used Hungarian folk songs in his Western art music compositions. Furthermore, Bartók conducted fieldwork in Hungary in order to collect folksongs to better understand how to utilize them in his compositional process. Weston, like Bartók, conducted fieldwork. He gathered recordings in the United States, traveled to West Africa to hear music performed live and to collect folksongs. He then used the information he gathered to compose jazz infused with West African music.

Euba's theoretical work focuses on the implementation of African music on the piano, and thus is an ideal tool for analyzing Weston's music. Harmony is the most influential of all European musical elements in West Africa. Agawu states, "Of all the musical influences spawned by the colonial encounter, that of tonal functional harmony has been the most pervasive, the most far reaching."⁵⁷⁸ Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising that the piano has become one of the most influential European instruments in Africa. Euba's term 'African Pianism' describes the compositional technique of integrating elements of African

⁵⁷⁸ Agawu *Representing African Music*, 8

music with the piano. This integration could involve an African musician who plays classical music, but it could also be used to describe a non-African musician who employs African musical elements in a piano composition.

Euba has identified four stages of intercultural activity in the process of creative musicology. The first is the collection of information by means of fieldwork. Second, the composition of short creative works based on folk or traditional music. Third, the inclusion of embellishments and original material in the composition of short creative works based on folk or traditional music. Finally, the creation of large-scale compositions that are influenced by folk songs or traditional music but do not contain any specific references to traditional music or folksongs.⁵⁷⁹ According to Euba this is the same process Béla Bartók used to implement traditional music into his compositions. Euba's concept of creative musicology is generally used to identify the synthesis of traditional musics with Western art music. However, I believe that the concepts and characteristics of creative musicology may also be identified in the activities of African American jazz musicians who merge traditional African music with jazz. Therefore, in this musical analysis section, I will demonstrate that Weston has utilized traditional African music in his compositions and in some instances has followed Euba's process of creative musicology.

There has been much criticism over the use of the piano, a European instrument, in the composition of music identified as West African. However, it must be understood that the piano is simply a tool that the musician uses to express himself. In the hands of the composer it makes little difference whether it is of European origin. It is an available means to express a musical end. There have been many instruments that were not indigenous to Africa and yet have become

⁵⁷⁹ Euba, personal communication, Spring 2007

part of its tradition. These include the hourglass tension drum and the *goje* fiddle that originated from Middle East, the guitar that originated from Portugal and Spain, and the xylophone, which may have come from Indonesia. “The *goje* and xylophone are today regarded as African, evidence that the assimilation and adoption of ‘foreign’ musical instruments have long been a facet of African culture.”⁵⁸⁰ The Portuguese were responsible for introducing the Spanish guitar to Africa in the sixteenth century. It is thought to have arrived with sailors on merchant ships that traded along the African coast.⁵⁸¹

The piano is but another instrument, a tool that the West African musician may use as part of a rich percussive melodic tradition. In fact, because the piano is a percussion instrument and yet has the ability to produce many different pitches, it seems like the ideal instrument for African music. Euba has pointed out, “At a point of cultural contact, musical instruments presumably maintain a close relationship to their prototypes, but begin to diverge and assume new structural features, functions, idioms, and so forth when adapted to local conditions...this occurs only after several millennia.”⁵⁸² The use of the piano, however, is still too “close to the point of cultural contact” for any substantial developmental features to be identifiable.⁵⁸³

African pianism as introduced above, (like much of Euba’s theoretical work) is primarily found in Western classical music and it is not limited to piano music. It is also identified in music for chamber groups, and in compositions for large orchestras. Most of the literature on African pianism has been on its exemplars in Western classical music. However, examples of African pianism can be found in other kinds of music; particularly those that have the ability to

⁵⁸⁰ Agawu *Representing African Music*, 6

⁵⁸¹ Graham, *The Da Capo Guide to Contemporary African Music*, 15

⁵⁸² Euba, “Towards an African Pianism,” 10

⁵⁸³ *Ibid*, 10

incorporate elements of African music with distinctly different styles. For instance, there is the potential for an African pianism that synthesizes African and Chinese music, or African and Indian music. The term was originally intended to be restricted to African music, but the concept of merging music elements from different cultures is easily expanded. African music need not even be involved in the musical synthesis, (e.g. a merging of North Indian Classical music with Korean folk music). The possibilities are really endless. For this reason I think that it would be useful to use the term Intercultural Musical Synthesis for what Euba calls African Pianism.

For the purposes of my musical analysis section, the identification of intercultural music synthesis will be limited to that of West African music with jazz. Euba has pointed out that, “From a certain perspective all known types of contemporary music existing in the world may be said to be intercultural.”⁵⁸⁴ An interesting feature of the intercultural relationship between Africans and African Americans is that African Americans have specifically sought to connect with their African roots. The fact that Africans and African Americans are closely culturally related allows for the possibility of a tightly interwoven relationship and the closer the relationship is between two interacting cultures the more complicated it becomes to distinguish between individual traits of the two cultures.

While it maybe argued that all jazz is intercultural music synthesis because of the nature of its origins, I believe that it is important to differentiate jazz that intentionally attempts to incorporate West African musical elements and jazz that does not. There is no question that jazz was developed by descendants of Africans and contains unmistakable African musical elements. However it has been acculturated by Western influence to such an extent that it must be seen as distinctly separate from African music. In this way, musicians who consciously incorporate

⁵⁸⁴ Euba, “Intercultural expressions in Neo-African Art Music,” 115

African elements into their music to enhance it, make the incorporation of African material distinctly identifiable.⁵⁸⁵ Randy Weston is one of those musicians.

13.2 THE MUSIC OF RANDY WESTON

Randy Weston is an excellent example of a musician who effectively employs intercultural musical synthesis. He integrates African musical elements into his own playing, which is primarily in a jazz style as a way of reestablishing his African roots. He also utilizes African musicians and instruments in combination with Western instruments to create a synthesis of African music and jazz; he has abandoned the term jazz, opting to name his music ‘African Rhythms’.

To understand Weston’s African Rhythms, we must first understand Weston’s concept of pan-Africanism in full detail. Indeed, his concept of Africa is not restricted to sub-Saharan Africa. It includes Africans and their music throughout the diaspora. Thus, Weston’s use of African musical techniques is not restricted to African traditional material. He infuses his music with West African traditional folk songs and dance rhythms, but he also uses material from Latin America, the Caribbean, North Africa and West African popular music. In discussing African elements in the music of Randy Weston, all music of the diaspora is included in many of its traditional and modern forms. If it is necessary, we may then label Weston’s activity Pan-African Intercultural Musical Synthesis.

⁵⁸⁵ It should also be understood that under Euba’s definition, intercultural music synthesis might also include African musicians who play jazz, presumably because they would unconsciously incorporate identifiable African musical elements, into traditional jazz repertoire.

Randy Weston was not the first musician to use African material in his jazz compositions or improvisations. In fact, the use of African material can be traced back to Jelly Roll Morton's use of the "Latin Tinge" in his solo piano works.⁵⁸⁶ Aside from the influence that Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk had on Weston, one of Weston's first discoveries of African influenced jazz was the Cuban infused music of Chano Pozo in Dizzy Gillespie's big band. Weston describes his first opportunity to hear Pozo with Gillespie, "Hearing Chano Pozo with Dizzy Gillespie's Orchestra in 1947 turned me around, and I've been working with hand drums ever since. Chano was Cuban, but you could hear pure Africa in his drum sound. It was a marriage, a complete circle."⁵⁸⁷ As previously stated Weston cites Blakey's first infusions of African music as inspiration as well. However Weston also realized that African music was present throughout the diaspora; "When you look at world history and you see the African retention in what we do here, in what we do in Jamaica and Brazil, you hear it in the music. You hear the rhythm, you hear the call-and-response, and you hear the humor."⁵⁸⁸

Weston stressed that despite being in "different parts of the world and speaking different languages," it was important for descendents of Africa to identify with the African continent.⁵⁸⁹ "Africa is like a huge tree, with branches to Brazil, to Cuba, and America. The approach to music is identical: rhythm, polyrhythm, call-and-response."⁵⁹⁰ Weston's opinion of the importance of African music does not end with Latin America, the Caribbean, and African America. He states, "Most of the music of the Western Hemisphere comes out of African

⁵⁸⁶ Shipton, *New History of Jazz*, 831

⁵⁸⁷ Panken "African Soul," 20

⁵⁸⁸ Musto, "African Rhythms" *All About Jazz*

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid*

⁵⁹⁰ Bouchard, "Randy Weston's Pan-African Revival," 20

traditional music.”⁵⁹¹ Certainly many recent popular music scholars have tended to agree with Weston’s opinion.⁵⁹² When Weston is asked why he places such importance on the influence of African traditional music he says it is because “There’s always the emphasis on the differences in us. But I’m looking for the similar.”⁵⁹³

Keeping Weston’s philosophical concepts in mind, we move to his musical work. In order to investigate his use of West African music in composition and performance I have borrowed Euba’s five characteristics used to identify what he calls African pianism, (which I refer to as Pan-African intercultural musical synthesis). Looking at both Weston’s use of the piano and at his ensemble compositions, we can see elements of all five of these characteristics. An examination of Weston’s artistic output will show that he has utilized all of these techniques.

EUBA’S FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF AFRICAN PIANISM:⁵⁹⁴

1. Direct borrowing of thematic material from traditional African sources
2. Thematic repetition
3. The use of rhythmic or tonal motifs based on traditional sources
4. Percussive treatment of the piano
5. Manipulating the piano to behave like an African instrument

⁵⁹¹ Panken “African Soul,” 20

⁵⁹² Charles Kiel and Steven Feld, *Music Grooves*, (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1994)

⁵⁹³ Panken “African Soul,” 20

⁵⁹⁴ Akin, “Towards an African Pianism”

13.2.1 Direct borrowings of thematic material from traditional African sources

While on tour in Nigeria, Weston took the opportunity to record many different traditional songs and adapt them to the piano, describing this time Weston states, “I would tape Nigerian folk music, then take the same melodies and the same rhythms and play it on the piano.”⁵⁹⁵ Weston’s most obvious use of thematic material borrowed directly from traditional African sources is in his song, “Congolese Children.” This song appears on a few of his recordings from the 1960s and 70s; it was first released on the album *Highlife: Music from the New African Nations* recorded in 1963.⁵⁹⁶ “Congolese Children” is Weston’s adaptation of a traditional Bashai Pygmy song that he heard schoolboys from the Bashai tribe sing during his trip to Congo. The melody is based on an F major diatonic scale and he sets the melody in a 4/4 meter. Weston has recorded this piece in multiple settings. On the original recording the composition is arranged for six horns and a rhythm section. Weston has also performed the piece on solo piano. In both situations the melody is of prime importance and is repeated numerous times. With each repetition of the melody Weston alters the instrumentation and harmonic organization of the accompaniment. One of Weston’s favorite arranging techniques is to have the full ensemble state the melody the first time through and on the repeat, play the melody on the piano with no accompaniment from the horns.⁵⁹⁷ The number of times the melody is repeated is unusual for a jazz arrangement compared to the norm of the time. This indicates that a high level of importance is placed on the melody, as it would be if it were sung over and over again by children.

⁵⁹⁵ Goddet, “Interview With Randy Weston,” 9

⁵⁹⁶ Randy Weston, *Highlife: Music from the New African Nations*, Colpix, 1963

⁵⁹⁷ Weston uses this arranging technique on a number of different compositions and its importance is discussed below.



Figure 6: “Congolesse Children”

On his *Highlife* album Weston also arranged and performed two compositions by modern African composers, “Niger Mambo,” by Bobby Benson and “Mystery of Love,” by Guy Warren. Weston’s use of their works is relevant under this first technique of Intercultural Musical Synthesis, as these composers unquestionably utilize traditional rhythmic and melodic elements in these compositions. Both Benson and Warren employ African traditional percussion instruments and rhythm patterns in their songs, merging these traditional musical traits with Western horns. Weston’s interpretation of their compositions demonstrates his understanding of the unwritten characteristics of the genre and he accurately maintains many of West African music elements. Weston could have interpreted these compositions with a more conventional jazz performance; yet, he chose to emphasize the West African material in each. He did this by preserving the African rhythmic patterns and instruments prescribed by the composers.

“Niger Mambo,” composed by famous highlife musician Bobby Benson, is essentially a highlife song. The drumbeat that Weston’s rhythm section plays is consistent with that of other highlife songs of the time. The use of a highlife rhythm pattern rather than a jazz swing pattern indicates that Weston understood the importance of preserving the West African rhythmic element in Benson’s composition. The highlife rhythm used on “Niger Mambo” is indicated in figure 7.



Figure 7: The highlife rhythmic pattern used in “Niger Mambo.”

The second work by an African composer recorded by Weston on his *Highlife* album is “Mystery of Love.” Weston was so fond of the song that it became the theme song for his African Rhythms ensemble. The work features a more traditional rhythmic organization than Benson’s tune; in fact, the rhythmic pattern used in this composition is a well-known timeline common in Yoruba traditional music. This piece is discussed further below.

13.2.2 Thematic repetition

Thematic repetition is a technique used quite often by Weston and it can be heard in conjunction with many of the other characteristics of Intercultural Musical Synthesis. The use of repetition in Weston’s music can be found in left hand ostinatos in compositions such as the first movement of *Uhuru Afrika*, and in a piece titled “Lagos” written in 1963. These are excellent examples of Weston’s implementation of thematic repetition. While there is a distinctive harmonic movement from one whole tone scale to another in the first example, in both examples the repetition of the ostinato creates a steady, rhythmically oriented accompaniment in which the establishment of a groove takes precedence over harmonic movement.

Movement I. *Uhuru Afrika*



Figure 8: Thematic Repetition

The repetition of the melody in “Congoese Children,” (Figure 6), is yet another example of the use of repetition in Weston’s music. As stated above, the repetition of the melody and its variation dominates every performance of this composition. In fact, even when musicians take turns performing improvised solos on the original recording, the melody is consistently performed in the background, underneath the solos. During Weston’s own improvised solo he never fully ceases playing the melody, and constantly refers to it throughout his entire solo.

Likewise, in a solo performance of “Kasbah Kids” recorded on the album *Blues to Africa*, Weston’s melody consists of two recurring melodic phrases that alternate and are developed extensively throughout the performance, becoming evermore intricate with polyrhythmic layering (see figure 13, page 242.)⁵⁹⁸ The melodic phrases in this song are very short, particularly the second phrase, which is only three notes long and repeated continuously. “Kasbah Kids” is an unusual example of Weston’s thematic repetition because the repeated

⁵⁹⁸ Randy Weston, *Blues To Africa* Freedom; 1974

melodic phrases are found in the highest voice. (The majority of thematic repetition in Weston's work appears in the low voice.) For this reason, "Kasbah Kids" functions as a sort of upside down ostinato. This is not however uncommon in West African music; in fact, it is quite common for the higher pitched drums, rattles and bells to perform a repeating ostinato while a low pitched master drum improvises rhythmic patterns under the accompaniment.

13.2.3 The use of rhythmic or tonal motifs based on traditional sources

With regards to his compositional techniques, Weston states, "I've been going through a period of heavy concentration on rhythm... using a lot of traditional rhythms and also playing the blues, so people can recognize that there is actually no difference in the musics. It's like I'm developing the language of the African-talking drums on piano."⁵⁹⁹ One example of Weston's use of a rhythmic motif based on a traditional source comes from his performance of Guy Warren's composition "Mystery of Love." Weston has recorded this song many different times. When Weston performs "Mystery of Love" with a rhythm section, as he does on the recording *Highlife*, the percussion section accompanies the melody with a common West African time line or bell pattern. This time line pattern is very common in West African traditional music and is often referred to as the 'standard time pattern.'⁶⁰⁰ This particular orientation of the standard time pattern is often associated with the Yoruba drumming found primarily in Northwestern

⁵⁹⁹ Robert Palmer, "The Musical Roots of Randy Weston," *Rolling Stone*, 30 (October 1980), 25

⁶⁰⁰ Agawu, "Structural Analysis or Cultural Analysis?," 38

Nigeria.⁶⁰¹ The use of the Yoruba orientation reflects music gathered from Weston's two trips to Nigeria. During solo piano performances of "Mystery of Love," Weston plays the timeline in the upper range of the keyboard, imitating the African bell that usually plays the rhythm.

On Weston's original recording this pattern is accompanied by a high drum part that articulates a six beat subdivision, represented here as quarter notes. The rhythms of the time line and high drum coincide in the first half of the measure and diverge in the second as the time line emphasizes its offbeat phrasing. Interestingly, the same kind of interaction between the high drum part and standard time pattern can be found in the traditional Ewe funeral dance rhythm, *Adowa*. In *Adowa* there is a secondary bell pattern that is identical to the high drum part performed in "Mystery of Love." As can be seen from the figures below, the interaction between the two parts is very similar. The example of *Adowa* given here is only one of many instances in Southern Ghanaian drumming where the time pattern interacts with a secondary bell pattern articulating the main beats or a subdivision of the main beats.

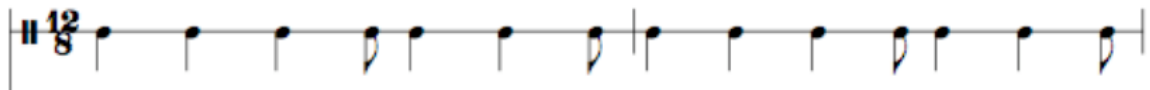


Figure 9: Standard time pattern

⁶⁰¹ See Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 75; and Willie Anku, “Circles and Time: A Theory of Structural Organization of Rhythm in African Music.” *Music Theory Online*. (Vol. 6, No. 1, 2000, (<http://www.societymusictheory.org/mto/issues/mto.00.6.1/toc.6.1.html>))

Standard Time pattern with high drum secondary part in “Mystery of Love”



High Drum Pattern

Primary *Adowa* bell pattern



Secondary bell Pattern

Figure 10: Primary *Adowa* bell pattern with secondary bell pattern

Weston is also fond of using African tonal motifs when improvising solos. For example, on the recording of “Mystery of Love” found on his *Highlife* album, he improvises using an organization of melodic tones that is consistent with Anlo Ewe tonal organization.⁶⁰² While the rest of the ensemble states the melody and provides a stable accompaniment, Weston improvises a solo line that complements the melody. He limits his note choices to six tones over the span of three octaves. These pitches are C#, D#, E, F#, G#, and B. Using these tones in stepwise motion creates the sense of C# minor, or a C# minor hexatonic scale. However, upon a closer look at the

⁶⁰² The Anlo Ewe are an ethnic group that occupy a region of West Africa near the Eastern border of Ghana and into Togo.

way Weston utilizes these tones it seems that he uses them in a way that is closer to that of Anlo Ewe pentatonic melodic construction.

It is widely accepted that West African traditional vocal music may employ scales from four to seven steps.⁶⁰³ In his dissertation, *Tonal Resources and Compositional Processes of Ewe Traditional Vocal Music*, George Dor states that “Anlo Ewe use pentatonic tonal resources in constructing their melodies.”⁶⁰⁴ One of Dor’s most significant assertions is that, although Ewe songs may contain up to seven tones, two of these tones function as added tones and are only used in specific circumstances. In addition, it is not uncommon for Ewe composers and performers to utilize two closely related pentatonic scales, which creates a sense that the tonal construction is hexatonic when it is really pentatonic. Dor states:

Hexatonic modes are mostly realized in songs that introduce a sixth tone only at certain structural points of a melody that is originally pentatonic...What I call ‘temporary tones’ within Anlo hexatonic tonal resources can be explained under the following rubrics: (1) sparing use under which...neighbor tones can be subsumed; (2) juxtaposition of two pentatonic modes...⁶⁰⁵

Weston’s implementation of the six tones in his solo corresponds closely to that of Anlo Ewe vocalists.⁶⁰⁶ The primary nature of the solo is pentatonic. The first pentatonic, C# E F#, G# and B is outlined clearly in the descending line moving from measure one to measure two (see figure 11.) The D# makes its first appearance in the second phrase. At this point the D# seems to take precedence over the E, thereby relegating the E to an upper neighbor tone in measure three

⁶⁰³ Nketia, *The Music of Africa*, 147

⁶⁰⁴ George Dor, *Tonal Resources and Compositional Processes of Ewe Traditional Vocal Music*, (PHD Dissertation University of Pittsburgh, 2001), 111

⁶⁰⁵ Dor, *Tonal Resources and Compositional Processes*, 126

⁶⁰⁶ I am not implying that Ewe vocalists would sing in the same manner that Weston is playing. I simply intend to show that Weston is organizing his pitch selection in a way that it functions similarly to that of Ewe vocalists.

and in the descending cadential figure of the second phrase. In Western music, including jazz the minor pentatonic represented in Weston's solo C# E F# G# and B is quite common; in fact, it could be said that the majority of pentatonic improvisation focuses on this form of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale. Why then, does Weston choose to emphasize the D# over the E? The simple answer is that the D# features prominently in Warren's original melody. However, there is also close connection to the tonal organization of Anlo Ewe music.

It is thus significant to note the emphasis Weston places on the D#, which creates the pentatonic C# D# F# G# and B. This configuration of a pentatonic scale at first seems to be uncommon in Western music. However, it can be reordered as the third mode of a G# minor pentatonic. If looked at from this perspective, Weston is juxtaposing two minor pentatonic scales with the same construction, simply by utilizing both the D# and E in his improvisation. This same juxtaposition can be found in Anlo Ewe vocal music.⁶⁰⁷ Many traditional Ewe folksongs utilized the tones D E F G A and C, each tone is a half step higher than its corresponding pitch in Weston's solo.⁶⁰⁸ Dor indicates that while a reduction of the tone set would indicate a hexatonic tonal organization, the specific use of tones indicates a pentatonic function. There are times when Weston's juxtaposition of the two pentatonic scales breaks some of the 'rules' established by Dor, however the overall impression of the solo is pentatonic. When asked about his use of Ewe pentatonic tonal organization, Weston said that he had recordings of Ewe vocal music at the time, the use was not intentional, but that it probably seeped into his consciousness because he listened to the recordings frequently.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁷ Dor, *Tonal Resources and Compositional Processes*, 126-129

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid*

⁶⁰⁹ Weston, personal communication, February 2008



Figure 11: First phrases of Weston's improvised solo on "Mystery of Love"

(See Appendix A for a full transcription of Weston's improvised introduction.)

13.2.4 Percussive treatment of the piano

Weston has a fondness for emphasizing the percussive possibilities of the piano. In these situations rhythmic articulation and timbre play a much larger role than specific note choices. Robert L. Doerschuk points out, "At times [Weston moves] to the bottom of the 96-key Bosendorfer Imperial Grand. The rumble of these lowest notes doubtless appeals to Weston's fascination with blurring the line between percussive effects and tonality."⁶¹⁰ An example of this can be heard on a solo performance of Weston's composition "Lagos." Here Weston uses the

⁶¹⁰ Robert L. Doerschuk. "Randy Weston: Back to the Fountain" 88: *The Greats of Jazz Piano*, (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2001)

lowest notes of his piano to create a repeating rhythmic drone of unspecified pitch. He also uses this technique to imitate the sound of an airplane.⁶¹¹

Another example of Weston's percussive treatment of the piano can be heard in the introduction of his solo performance of "Blues to Africa", from the album of the same name. In this example, Weston contrasts low rumbling chords with a rhythm played with drum-like percussive sound in the upper register of the piano. The instance also evokes the call-and-response technique prevalent throughout West Africa. This piece can also be heard on the recording *Highlife*. On the *Highlife* version, the low rumbling note clusters are given to the horns, and the trombone in particular plays with a tone that is reminiscent of the *kakaki*, the long royal trumpet of the Hausa of northern Nigeria. However, Weston keeps the one note percussive line in the piano and plays in polyrhythm with the drum set.

13.2.5 Make the Piano Behave like an African Instrument.

During the introduction of many of his compositions, Weston will often improvise in the low end of his piano while the rest of the musicians provide accompaniment. When this is done Weston's role as soloist is analogous to that of the master drum of West African drum ensembles in the sense that both are improvising authoritatively using low resonating pitches. At the same time, his band functions in the same role as the accompanying instruments of West African drum ensembles. The accompanying instruments provide repeating ostinatos, and Weston solos under this accompaniment in the same way a master drummer would fit his part into a drum ensemble.

⁶¹¹ Weston composed "Lagos" in celebration of his trip to Nigeria in 1963. The composition was written on an airplane as Weston was traveling to Nigeria, in an interview he states that the opening rhythms are intended to imitate the sound of the airplane engine.

Weston also seems to be fond of imitating other African instruments such as the xylophone and the *mbira*. In his compositions “Congolese Children” and “Kasbah Kids” he employs a technique that imitates what at first sounds like a toy piano. However, upon further listening it seems that Weston is imitating a small xylophone or *mbira*. In both situations he plays a single line in each hand in a sort of polyrhythmic counterpoint. Furthermore, in each case one hands plays a repeated ostinato that provides an accompaniment to the melody, which is played by the other hand.



Figure 12: “Congolese Children” *mbira* impression

In the performance of “Congolese Children” this technique is used for only one eight-bar section of the melody. In the example of “Kasbah Kids,” the entire song is played in the upper range of the piano making it reminiscent of a small xylophone or *mbira*. In “Kasbah Kids,” Weston plays repeating melodic motifs in his right hand while in his left hand he plays an accompanying melody that creates a polyphonic song that Weston says is his interpretation of children playing and singing in the streets of Kasbah, Morocco.



Figure 13: “Kasbah Kids” *mbira* impression

Weston’s use of African material is not limited to these musical examples but abounds in all of his ensemble and solo performances. He has effectively assimilated African material into his playing to the extent that his use of the term African Rhythms for his music, rather than jazz, is justified.

The following section is an analysis and comparison of two of Weston’s compositions. The first is the movement I of Weston’s *Uhuru Afrika*. This work is compared to the composition “Caban Bamboo Highlife”.

13.3 ANALYSIS OF “UHURU KWANZA,”

For much of his life Weston listened to and studied African traditional music. He took every opportunity he had to listen to the music of Africa in live performances and on recordings often given to him by United Nation’s delegates. In a sense, his research culminated in the composition and recording of *Uhuru Afrika*, recorded in 1959. Aside from the political statement Weston made with this composition, he also incorporated within it many aspects of West African traditional music. In fact, *Uhuru Afrika* is quite possibly his most complete synthesis of West African traditional music with jazz.

Uhuru Afrika is divided up into five sections, an introduction followed by movements I-IV. Although the introduction is relatively brief, it is significant as it is marked by a collaboration between Weston and Langston Hughes, who supplied text for the introduction in the form of a freedom poem. Langston Hughes’ participation in this project is significant because he was an instrumental contributor to both the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement. Tuntemeke Sanga, a friend of Weston’s and a United Nations Delegate from Tanzania, performed Hughes’s text in a combination of English and Swahili. Weston chose to use Swahili because he felt that it represented a unified Africa. This is yet another example of his philosophy of inclusion, of a united African people, a philosophy developed by the influences mentioned in part two of this dissertation.

For this composition, Weston employed different combinations of horns and percussion along with a jazz rhythm section. In its fullest sections Weston used four trumpets, three trombones, and five saxophonists—who double at times on piccolo, flute, and clarinet—guitar, bass, drums, piano, hand percussion, bongos and congas. The full ensemble is only heard in

short sections in movement II and III. For the remainder of the composition he used the horns in smaller groups, mixing up the combinations in order to produce specific tonal textures.

At this point I would like to look specifically at movement I “Uhuru Kwanza”. (For all musical examples of “Uhuru Kwanza” please see Appendix A.) I chose to analyze this movement for a few reasons. First, I did not have access to a score of the composition, only a sound recording. When listening to the first movement, I realized that the West African traditional musical elements it contained were fairly clear. Second, the instrumentation was such that I was able to transcribe the entire ensemble, to the extent that a sufficiently clear visual representation was obtained to facilitate an analysis of the work.

“Uhuru Kwanza” begins with drums and percussion. African hand drums and percussion instruments dominate the rhythm section, while the drum set plays a lesser role as an accompanying instrument. Throughout the song there is a polyrhythmic feel that varies between 6/8 and 3/4. I chose to notate the score in 6/8 because it seemed to coincide with the timeline played in the hand percussion. The traditional timeline used is a derivative of the well-known standard time pattern (see Figure 9, p. 235.) The rhythms of “Uhuru Kwanza” are not necessarily from any specific traditional group; instead Weston’s rhythm section members create a synthesis of West African rhythms, drawn on from individual percussionists’ own cultures to create a traditional sounding rhythmic feel.

The function of the percussion section is also related to West African traditional drum ensemble. The percussion section performs the roles of a West African drum ensemble for the entire movement. In the opening forty-eight measures bongos, a shaker, jawbones, and a drum set, function as the accompaniment. The drum set, though not normally part of a traditional drum ensemble, performs a function similar to the African hourglass tension drum. Known by

many different names, the hourglass tension drum is one of the most popular traditional drums of Africa, it has the ability to produce a wide range of tones by loosening and tightening the strings holding the drumheads. This drum plays an important role in many different ensembles in West Africa as both leader and accompanying instrument. The drum set functions as the tension drum by using the high tom as a high tone of the hourglass drum and the low tom as a low tone of the hourglass drum.⁶¹² The accompanying instruments play continuously repeating rhythms while a low pitched drum, acting as a master drum or leader, plays a changing rhythm in an improvised soloistic fashion. This ensemble structure and the roles played by each instrument are consistent with the roles of instruments in the drum ensembles of the Ewe people in Ghana and Togo, and of the *dùndún* drum ensembles of the Yoruba in Nigeria. In both traditions, a large low-pitched drum functions as the master drum, playing an improvised solo part while the remaining drums and idiophones provide a relatively stable accompaniment.⁶¹³ It is thus evident that the percussion section of Weston's piece functions in the same way as a West African traditional drum ensemble, specifically those of Ewe and Yoruba tradition.

The bass and piano enter in measure forty-nine and present a repeating theme based on a scale played in stepwise motion. This repeating theme creates an ostinato played in polyrhythm and metric hemiola with the rhythmic groove that is established by the rhythm section. The hemiola occurs because the rhythm section phrases its eighth notes in groups of three while the bass and piano phrase their eighth notes in groups of two. This interaction creates the feeling of the meters 6/8 and 3/4 being phrased simultaneously. The polyrhythmic interaction of melodic

⁶¹² The tom tom drums of the drum set have a limited tonal range that is dependent on the size and number of drums used on the set. A standard jazz drum set in late 1950 usually included two toms. Therefore the drum set is only able to imitate the high and low tone of the tension drum.

⁶¹³ The information given on African Drum ensembles comes from my own personal performance experience, and from Anicet Mundundu and Kofi Gbolonyo.

material plays an important role in West African traditional music and Weston presented his interpretation of that technique here.

The whole tone scale melody is repeated six times and then transposed down a half step and repeated four more times, thus all twelve pitches are utilized in the repeated ostinato. As stated in the previous chapter, the ostinato is significant because it was a rhythmic technique prevalent in jazz composition at the time and it created a release from the constraints of Western harmony allowing the composer and performers to focus on the groove and rhythmic aspects of the composition.

It should also be noted that the melody has a two-measure repetition. This is significant because while most jazz compositions of the time focused on four measure phrases creating eight or twelve measure sections, Weston uses shorter two measure phrases. The shorter phrases allow him to build more varied sections of six and ten measures. Furthermore, a shorter two-measure phrase is akin to the repeated ostinatos commonly found in West African traditional music. Using a two-measure repeated theme also allows for more polyrhythmic interaction between instruments in a West African traditional musical setting. This is explained by the fact that when you combine many different simple two-measure phrases one on top of another there is the opportunity for accurate and complex polyrhythm.

In Section A, the whole tone ostinato is presented linearly, in stepwise motion. In section B, Weston takes the whole tone material and varies it rhythmically. He also utilizes it vertically, first in the bass and piano that accompany the melody of section B1 and then in the horns when B2 is stated. Sections C1 and C2 are a further development of the whole tone material first stated in section A.

Weston says that his use of the whole tone scale, a symmetric scale that subdivides the octave equally, comes from Thelonious Monk.⁶¹⁴ Symmetric scales are often found in West African traditional music. Nketia identifies four, five, six, and seven-tone “equidistant” scales in both instrumental and vocal music throughout Africa, he gives the example of a diminished seventh chord to identify four note equidistant scales, and states “each step of an ideal [five note] equidistant scale is larger than a major second but less than a minor third.”⁶¹⁵ The six-note equidistant scales used in West African traditional music are also whole tone scales and it is more than likely that Weston draws upon the information he has gathered to compose using an equidistant scale with this in mind.

In sections C1 and C2 the trombones provide a timbre that might be considered harsh and non-conventional by Western European standards. These horn blasts references back to the influence of the Harlem Renaissance and in particular, Ellington. The use of the trombones in these sections is similar to the way Ellington utilized his brass players to symbolize the primitive and savage aspects of Africa through music. Weston was also trying to produce the sound of African horns such as the *kakaki*, a royal trumpet used by the Hausa of Nigeria.⁶¹⁶ This example is Weston’s impression of the unique and individualized timbre production that is important in West African horn tonal production. As indicated in chapter 3, what is thought of as a ‘clear’ and ‘pure’ tone in terms of Western aesthetics is considered incomplete in many West African societies. Weston listened to many recordings of West African traditional music at the time, and these examples, coupled with the influence of Ellington’s group were most certainly an influence on “Uhuru Kwanza.”

⁶¹⁴ Weston, interview with Squinobal, 2007

⁶¹⁵ Nketia, *The Music of Africa*, 116-119

⁶¹⁶ Weston, Interview with Squinobal, 2007

When listening to “Uhuru Kwanza,” recorded in 1959, there is no question that it is Weston’s interpretation of West African traditional music. However, soon after releasing the album Weston took two trips to Nigeria as part of a U.S. cultural delegation. The first trip was in 1961 and the second was in 1963. An interesting transformation occurred in Weston’s music after his trips to West Africa. Upon his return to America after his second visit to Nigeria, Weston recorded and released the album *Highlife: Music from the New African Nations*.

This album presents a decidedly more popular style of West African music. The change in musical style is due to the fact that *Uhuru Afrika* was recorded before Weston traveled to Nigeria. Prior to this his musical sources were from America: and included his influential parents, West African musicians in America, and tapes from UN delegates. These were most likely more traditional sources. West African musicians in America were expected to showcase the ‘exotic’ side of West African traditional music to their American audiences. Likewise UN officials, when asked for musical examples, may have also felt obligated to showcase the more traditional musics of their countries in order to feel that they represented their nations respectfully. However, when Weston went to Nigeria and visited with musicians in Lagos, he was able to hear the popular music of urban West Africa. This popular music would have been much closer in spirit to the African American jazz that was happening at the same time. Weston states that his trips to Nigeria provided him with the first opportunity to hear West African highlife and to interact with highlife musicians.⁶¹⁷

Weston’s Recoding, *Highlife: Music from the New African Nations*, shows the influence of Nigerian popular music that Weston was exposed to on his trips to West Africa. The album contains seven songs, five by Weston and the previously mentioned works by Bobby Benson and

⁶¹⁷ Weston, interview with Squinobal, 2007

Guy Warren. The entire album features a decidedly highlife inspired rhythmic groove, with the exception of Warren's "Mystery of Love" which features more traditional drum rhythms. The first track on the recording, "Caban Bamboo Highlife" represents the album's highlife inspired theme well. A transcription of the the melody can be found in Appendix A, in order to facilitate a comparison to "Uhuru Kwanza," the first movement of *Uhuru Afrika*.

13.4 "CABAN BAMBOO HIGHLIFE"

While "Uhuru Kwanza" represented Weston's attempt to merge West African traditional music with jazz, "Caban Bamboo Highlife" is unmistakably influenced by highlife. The melody is written in the popular song form AABA, which is a form that is common in standard jazz repertoire, but is also common in highlife. Speaking on the subject of typical highlife melodic forms Agawu states, "At its most basic, it borrows from the outline of a popular melody or hymn tune."⁶¹⁸ This is certainly the case for Weston's "Caban Bamboo." The melody of Weston's piece is a simple diatonic theme in the key of F. The simplicity of the melody is also characteristic of highlife tunes, which are often short diatonic phrases.⁶¹⁹ (For all music examples of "Caban Bamboo" please see Appendix A.)

The first A section is harmonized in thirds by the horns. Upon its restatement, the piano performs it in thirds. Finally, the last A section is a combination of the first and second, with the piano playing the melody for the first four bars and the horns finishing it off. As discussed

⁶¹⁸ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 130

⁶¹⁹ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 130

earlier in the chapter, this is a technique that Weston employs often.⁶²⁰ Varying the instrumental texture on the melody provides an interesting contrast of timbre for the repeat of a melody that in standard jazz settings is often repeated without change each time it is performed.

The harmonization the A sections in thirds is significant to Weston's interpretation of highlife music and is a further indication that Weston understands the significance of West African traditional tonal organization in highlife music. In highlife, the presentation of a melody in thirds is a reference to the singing technique used in traditional Akan singing.⁶²¹ Although Weston learned to play highlife in Nigeria and the Akan are located in Ghana, the inclusion of this technique in Weston's interpretation of highlife music shows an important connectedness that highlife has throughout West Africa.

The bridge, or B section of Weston's "Caban Bamboo" features a repeated two-measure call-and-response figure by the horns, while the piano and bass perform a four measure repeated harmonic figure with a common root movement in fourths. The call-and-response in the horns is a strong example of traditional call-and-response techniques common in West African music. The harmonic movement is more typical of popular music and derives its origins from Western classical music, in this case most likely acquired through Weston's education in jazz. However, the merger of West African traditional call-and-response with Western harmony is again an important feature of highlife, as much as it is an an important feature in some jazz.

In this 1963 recording of "Caban Bamboo," Weston employs a highlife rhythmic pattern in the percussion section rather than a rhythm pattern associated with any particular traditional dance/drumming style. The difference between the rhythmic accompaniment of "Caban

⁶²⁰ See the example of "Congolese Children"

⁶²¹ Agawu *Representing African Music*, 131

Bamboo” and “Uhuru Kwanza” is that the drum set in “Caban Bamboo” fills a dominant role in the rhythm section, rather than the hand drum and percussion dominated rhythm section of “Uhuru Kwanza.” While “Caban Bamboo” still features some rhythm patterns associated with West African traditional dance/drumming, including an underlying standard time pattern, it is also accompanied by a steady bass drum beat, and the repeated eighth notes in the shaker. In “Caban Bamboo” the standard time pattern is played on a medium range drum, which possesses neither the bell’s ability to be heard over the percussion section nor the authority of a low sounding master drum. In a traditional setting, the standard time pattern would take precedence. It may be initiated by the master drummer, and sustained by a highly audible bell. Therefore, in the example of “Caban Bamboo” Weston demonstrates his understanding of the role of West African traditional rhythmic patterns in popular music, even though plays a less dominant or more integrated role in the overall texture of the music.

Weston’s understanding of highlife is further displayed by the fact that “Caban Bamboo” is performed in a simple 4/4 meter with not much polyrhythm. The result is a rhythm section that functions more like a jazz rhythm section. This is in contrast to “Uhuru Kwanza” where there was a high degree of polyrhythm in both the percussion section and the band.

Finally, in “Uhuru Kwanza,” the horns provide an Ellingtonian-like image of African jungle horns, while the piano takes over the main melodic role. However, in “Caban Bamboo” the horns function more like a highlife band horn section; the soprano saxophone and trumpet carry the majority of the melody while the low brass and reeds supply harmonic interjections.

In this comparison made between Weston’s compositions, “Uhuru Kwanza” and “Caban Bamboo” I have attempted to emphasize his choice to use highlife musical techniques and materials after his 1963 trip to Nigeria. Prior to Weston’s trips to West Africa he was forced to

rely on second hand information about the place he considered his homeland. The information he was able to acquire left him with a fairly accurate perception of West African traditional music. However, once Weston was able to experience West Africa for himself, his view of the complex nature of Nigerian urban society became much more nuanced. Furthermore, he was able to depict the complex cultural aspects in his music. It was clear to Weston that West African traditional music and culture still existed. For example, he was able to experience performances of traditional music at cultural centers on his trip, and he took short excursions to rural villages to hear traditional music performances.⁶²² However, Weston also spent significant time in Lagos, one of the most populated cities in West Africa, going to nightclubs every night and interacting with highlife musicians. Given the similarity between jazz musicians and highlife musicians, it is only natural that Weston would ultimately find a much closer relationship to highlife musicians and their music than he would with West African traditional musicians.

It is because of his trips to Africa that Weston was able to experience for himself the true nature of his spiritual homeland. This experience did not dissuade him from using of West African traditional material; it reinforced it. However, his trip also provided him with the knowledge that there were many different kinds of music being performed in West Africa, and he took advantage of his newfound knowledge by incorporating both West African traditional and popular music into his work throughout the 1960s.

⁶²² Weston, Solo performance at *Symposium of Composition in Africa and the Diaspora*, Cambridge, England (Organized by Akin Euba; August 7, 2005.)

14.0 CHAPTER 14: INTRODUCTION TO LATEEF'S MUSIC

Lateef was an integral part of Blakey's *The African Beat* album and Weston's *Uhuru Afrika* recordings. However his own music, though not necessarily based on West African themes, is inherently West African influenced. His own original approach to jazz is analogous in many ways to the approach to music making in many West African societies. This is part of the reason Lateef was such an important member of the previously mentioned recordings. Lateef states that all of his musical endeavors "are keyed to the notion that there is an intrinsic connection between African and African American music. In African American music I see a lot of African retentions and points of reference."⁶²³ When I spoke to Lateef, he, like Art Blakey, was adamant about stressing that African Americans developed their own music. However, he does recognize that there are significant points of connection with the music of West Africa, such as the desire to create an individualized sound.⁶²⁴ I should also mention that he does not actually recognize the terms 'jazz,' or 'improvisation.' He prefers the term 'autophysiopsychic music' to describe his music. This is similar to Weston who would rather have his music be described as 'African Rhythms.' Of the three musicians examined here only Blakey has whole-heartedly embraced the term jazz.

⁶²³ Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 152

⁶²⁴ Lateef, interview by Squinobal, 2007

According to Weinstein, Lateef has had a rich and complex relationship with Africa, “a tie culminating in the recording *Yusef Lateef in Nigeria in 1985*. But Lateef’s involvement with Africa could be considered to have begun with his conversion to Islam in 1948...there are a few characteristics [of his music] which very much fit the mold of Islamic music.”⁶²⁵ Weinstein identifies Lateef’s use of the blues as the main connection between his music and that of West Africa. “By marrying the blues to an Islamic musical consciousness, Lateef has joined the passionate African-American self-expression with the Islamic-African love for transpersonal patterns revealing the divine presence of the everyday world.”⁶²⁶ In much the same way the music of Ellington and Monk signify deep-rooted African music for Weston, the blues act as a cultural signifier for Lateef. Lateef’s music is packed with both the well-known twelve bar blues form as well as individual phrase inflection. Lateef also compares the blues to Nigerian music, he states, “One thing that is unusual, and at the same time similar, about Nigerian and African American music, is that the Nigerian musicians have maintained, historically, more of their music than African American musicians...On the other hand, the African American musician has maintained the blues, one of the most beautiful and productive musical forms created by African American musicians.”⁶²⁷ Lateef has developed a very personal connection between the blues and music throughout the continent. Lateef includes North Africa as well as the African diaspora in his estimation of his African roots. For example he states, “I was in the Nile Valley, just as a traveler. I identified the blues with that valley. It’s so rich agriculturally...and so I felt a parallel between that valley and the richness of the blues form.”⁶²⁸ There may also be a connection

⁶²⁵ Weinstein, *Night in Tunisia*, 147

⁶²⁶ *Ibid*, 153

⁶²⁷ Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 131

⁶²⁸ Weinstein, *Night in Tunisia*, 150

between the Nile Valley and the Mississippi River Valley noted for its delta blues. Lateef would have heard blues performers from the Mississippi delta area while living in both Chattanooga and Detroit.

The music of Nigeria and the Yoruba in particular has long been a source of inspiration for Lateef. As stated previously, he spent time studying Nigerian and Islamic influenced music. Although he does not utilize specific Nigerian music material, I think it would be constructive at this time to take a comparative look at the small jazz combo Lateef led during the 1960s and the Yoruba traditional dùndún drum ensembles. This comparison will help to bring to light the similarities between Lateef's music making activities and those common in Nigeria.

14.1 A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DÙNDÚN DRUM ENSEMBLES OF THE YORUBA AND YUSEF LATEEF'S SMALL JAZZ ENSEMBLES

Dùndún, a traditional style of music found among the Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria, is one of the most popular styles of drumming found in this area of West Africa. There are many different styles of music and drumming techniques in Yoruba culture. However, due to its prestige and popularity, dùndún can be considered representative of Yoruba drumming and “musical practice in general.”⁶²⁹ The style not only embodies the music of the Yoruba, it is also an excellent representation of the oral tradition in West Africa. Dùndún musicians in

⁶²⁹ Akin Euba. *Yoruba Drumming: The Dùndún Tradition*. Bareuth, W. Germany: E. Breitingen, Bayreuth University, 1990. 20

Yorubaland “are not simply music specialists, for musical knowledge in Yoruba culture is a combined expertise in several disciplines. In addition to possessing prerequisite knowledge in the craft of music, the Yoruba musician is also a historian, poet, philosopher, and critic of society.”⁶³⁰ The concepts of creativity, innovation, and improvisation found in dùndún are also present in small combo jazz ensembles like Yusef Lateef’s group.

Lateef’s group performs a specific style of jazz that developed in the late 1950s known as hard bop. There is no doubt that boundaries of stylistic differences in jazz have become blurred as musicians blend traits from different styles to form their own personal music. Yet, many of the concepts and conventions established in the formation of hard bop are representative of the mainstream genre of jazz today. These stylistic conventions, specifically the roles of the rhythm section and techniques developed for the improvisation of solos, are the main focus of this analysis. Though it is true that jazz is a diversified genre of music, to avoid confusion and misinterpretation for the purposes of this chapter, I will focus specifically on the work of Lateef and his performing group of the late 1950s and early 1960s, which was usually a quartet or quintet.

Lateef’s group of this time period performed a style of music that combined elements of both the written and oral jazz traditions. The compositions being performed, intentions of the composer—most often Lateef—and experiences of his musicians determined the extent to which Lateef’s groups relied on written and oral forms. Lateef studied composition at Wayne State University. Lateef was particularly fond of using a bass ostinato in many of his compositions and states that he learned this particular technique from Dr. Lawson while studying at Wayne State. He states, “From him I learned about the composition of ‘sheer weight,’ which implied that with

⁶³⁰ Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 20

a constant repetition of the bass chord or tone you could play any type of melody.”⁶³¹ Lateef also credits an influence from Arnold Schoenberg’s twelve-tone system. Lateef was intrigued by merging elements of West African music with elements of modern Western art music in a way that purposely reenacted the merging of West African and Western music during the early development of jazz.

Lateef describes his composition process as “endophyte composition” which is a horizontal method of composing. According to Lateef this process allows the composer to take “the vertical intervals of a chord and allow each note in the chord to move horizontally, each having its own rhythm and each note moves the intervallic distance of one of the intervals assigned to it, which are selected from a group of vertical intervals.”⁶³² This specific compositional process, however, seems to be something he developed later in his life. The majority of songs Lateef composed for his 1960s group can be described as head arrangements consisting of one and sometimes two part melodies harmonized by chord changes. His compositions were often well orchestrated, however, as was the norm for 1960s hard bop bands like Lateef’s, the notated portion of the song end after the performance of the melody.

Many professional jazz musicians find written materials or “theoretical representations helpful initially when studying a piece.”⁶³³ Therefore, many songs were at one time written out for musicians to learn. However, “once improvisers fix in their memories the features of a piece’s roadmap they no longer need to mark their changing positions within its form by reading the music.”⁶³⁴ Furthermore, once a song is learned the written materials may be lost forever and

⁶³¹ Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 77

⁶³² Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 115

⁶³³ Berliner. *Thinking in Jazz*, 92

⁶³⁴ *Ibid*, 92

the song then becomes part of the rich oral history of the genre. “Much of the jazz repertoire remains part of the community’s oral tradition and is not published as single sheet music items or in fake books.”⁶³⁵ This corresponds well with the opinion of many musicians and scholars that “a jazz piece is not a single model appearing in a fake book or on a recording. Rather, it is the precise version of a piece created by musicians at each performance event.”⁶³⁶ Lateef’s group held this view and created distinct versions of their songs with each performance.

In the early development of jazz, many composers and bandleaders would teach band members their parts orally because some musicians could not read music. Although all of his musicians could read music, bandleader/composer Charles Mingus felt that by making his musicians learn his compositions orally they would internalize the material better. “Not all the musicians who worked with Mingus had the patience for his method, but few have disputed its efficacy in freeing them to interpret arranged passages in a more musical and more personal way, rather than merely reproducing something fixed.”⁶³⁷ A person unfamiliar with the musical advantages of an oral tradition may wonder why the identification of an oral tradition is so important. However, for someone coming from a culture where the preservation of a musical tradition has been passed down orally for decades or centuries, the importance of maintaining oral tradition is quite clear.

There is a misconception that written tradition is more accurate and more complete than an oral one. Western scholars argue that music not set in stone by being written down, is unreliable. According to Bruno Nettl in some instances written traditions are likely to be more

⁶³⁵ Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, 93

⁶³⁶ *Ibid*, 94

⁶³⁷ Brian Priestley. *Mingus: A Critical Biography*. London; Melbourne; New York: Quartet Books, 1982. 66

inconsistent than oral traditions. He states that due to the inconsistencies of scribes, written traditions often develop different variations.⁶³⁸ If in fact, written traditions are as inconsistent as oral traditions, then perhaps oral traditions of music are superior to written, due to their ability to pass along the subtleties of music that are impossible to write down or notate without extreme elaboration and clutter. Such musical subtleties as the ebb and flow of a rhythmic time feel, the relationships and interaction between musical parts, and the timbre of specific instruments, are what bring music to life in performance.⁶³⁹

One of the most important aspects of transmission of an oral tradition is the subtlety of change that occurs throughout time that keeps the performance of the history and the lessons of life fresh and meaningful to its listeners. The music of West Africa is a vital, living, creative art form. In traditional West African performance situations, audiences are usually familiar with the music and they follow along with anticipation. However, although the anticipated performance recounts and reaffirms the society's history, there is the expectation that performances will be fresh and innovative every time. The creativity of professional performers can keep the interest of the audience, which makes them more receptive to the history that is so important to their culture.⁶⁴⁰

14.1.1 The structure of accompanying parts

In both dundún drum ensemble music and Lateef's small groups, secondary rhythm section instruments provide a supporting background or structural sound palette for the soloists

⁶³⁸ Bruno Nettl. *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-nine Issues and Concepts*. Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983. 189

⁶³⁹ Agawu. *Representing African Music*, 19

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 18

to perform with. Both styles of music have accompanying instruments that loosely adhere to predetermined roles in order to provide a foundation for the soloists to create upon. By using very little variation, the important secondary instruments supply a predictable musical arrangement that the soloist depends on for support. In this section, I will look at the roles of the secondary instruments in *dùndún* and the rhythm section in Lateef's and identify the important roles that must be followed in order for the soloist to perform at his highest ability. In doing so it will become evident that the two groups of supporting instruments play very similar roles.

In *dùndún* music the number of accompanying secondary instruments is variable. An ensemble can contain as few as one secondary instrument, to as many as twelve instruments, with eight different varieties of instruments possible.⁶⁴¹ For this study, I will use the construction of a standard *dùndún* ensemble, which has four types of instruments and is typical of most ensembles.⁶⁴² The types of instruments are *gúdúgúdú*, *isáájú*, *ikehìn*, and *iyáàlù*. The *iyáàlù* is the soloist and therefore not considered a supporting instrument. Thus, there are three supporting instruments that play the accompaniment. In Yoruba the group of secondary instruments is called the *omele*.

In the *omele* each instrument is responsible for its own independent rhythm. When played simultaneously, these independent rhythms produce a multilayered, multi-textured sound pallet. Euba stresses the importance of viewing the secondary parts as a combined whole rather than as individuals. Analyzing their interaction leads to a better understanding of the accompanying palette that is created for the leader to solo on top of. Through analysis of *omele* accompaniment, one can see that the upper *gúdúgúdú* rhythm comprises a consistent repeating

⁶⁴¹ Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 159

⁶⁴² *Ibid*, 159

progression, while the *isáájú* and *ikehìn* drums combined to imitate the top part rhythmically with an inverted melodic shape. Euba points out that “one of the stylistic features of *dùndún*, is a *gúdúgúdú* part that is often based on the composite of two of the other secondary parts.”⁶⁴³



Figure 14: The supporting instruments of the standard *Dùndún* ensemble

The complex interaction of the *omele* encourages the creativity of the soloist. If everyone played in unison it would not be very inspiring to the soloist. The *omele* produces a continuous accompaniment that helps to inspire the soloist by “providing continuity which allows the *iyáàlù* player time to think up what to say next.”⁶⁴⁴ *Omele* musicians may now and then make “spontaneous innovations” or changes to their fixed patterns.⁶⁴⁵ The accompaniment may feel inspired to respond with subtle variation to a soloist’s particularly moving praise text. However, “a creatively assertive *omele* player is in danger of conflicting with and upsetting the *iyáàlù*

⁶⁴³ Akin Euba. “Ilu Esu/Drumming for Esu: Analysis of a *Dùndún* Performance.” In *Essays for a Humanist: An Offering to Klaus Wachsmann*. (Spring Valley NY: Town House Press, 1977) 129 For more detailed transcriptions of the interaction of the secondary drums of the *Dùndún* ensemble see Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 474-542

⁶⁴⁴ Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 389

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 388

player, thus spoiling the performance.”⁶⁴⁶ Therefore, a supporting musician is doing his job when he “subjects himself to the *iyáàlù* player and avoids any temptation of showing off.”⁶⁴⁷

The soloist feels more secure improvising when he knows he is doing so against a “fairly stable background.”⁶⁴⁸ If the *omele* is steady and consistent then the soloist will feel secure enough to experiment creatively with the time and rhythm of a text. The soloist may even play in free rhythm above the accompaniment; however, if the accompaniment is easily upset then the soloist must adhere to the basic patten all of the time.⁶⁴⁹

The accompanying instruments of Lateef’s group and all hard bop groups are referred to as the rhythm section. The number of instruments in a rhythm section is usually three or four. Lateef usually employs a traditional rhythm section of piano, bass, and drum set although his bassist will sometimes double on rubab. When a rhythm section is supporting a soloist they are said to be accompanying or complementing the soloist, thus, the words “comp” or “comping” are used to describe this action.

Each instrument in the rhythm section is responsible for an independent part. When combined, the interaction of the rhythm section instruments is quite similar to that of the *dùndún omele*. From a casual glance or listen, one can clearly observe the constant rhythm of the drum set. With a closer inspection at the interaction of the bass and piano, it is evident that these two instruments often combine to suggest the rhythm of the drum set, similar to the relationship of the *omele*; though, the relationship is by no means as strict as that of the *omele*. Consider the

⁶⁴⁶ Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 389

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 388

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 388

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 389

interaction of Lateef's rhythm section performing his composition "SNAFU."⁶⁵⁰ The ostinato established at the beginning of the song stays relatively consistent throughout, with only slight variation from each accompanying musician as they respond to the soloist and one another.



Figure 15: The interaction of Lateef's rhythm section on "SNAFU"

The role of the jazz rhythm section is more variable and less stringent than that of the *omele*. Each instrument is free to respond and interact with the soloist in a communicative call-and-response by varying their parts rhythmically and tonally. When learning how to respond to soloists, rhythm section players develop an assortment of appropriate patterns.⁶⁵¹ Berliner states, "With much of the music's details left up to their discretion, jazz musicians improvise their parts around these patterns."⁶⁵² They may have developed them from past teachers or from listening to recordings of famous performers. Nonetheless, rhythm section players are required to know the conventional comping patterns for different song styles, and they should also be aware of the particular likes and dislikes of the soloist they are comping for. "To learn to comp with subtlety and improvise with distinction, young bass players, drummers and pianists must master the

⁶⁵⁰ Yusef Lateef, *Eastern Sounds*, Prestige, 1961.

⁶⁵¹ Berliner *Thinking in Jazz*, 330

⁶⁵² *Ibid*, 314

performance conventions associated with their instruments.”⁶⁵³ Once rhythm section musicians have learned the rules of their particular instruments they use these patterns to communicate and respond to the soloist. With his penchant for ostinatos in the bass parts, Lateef’s groups tend to stick closer to the repeated rhythms established during the presentation of the melody than many hard bop groups less dependent on ostinatos. (See Appendix B for a collection of ostinatos used by Lateef.) Similar to the dùndún tradition, the members of Lateef’s rhythm section are not only great complementary players; they are also great soloists as well. However, like the *omele* they too have to blend into the background when Lateef takes center stage.

14.1.2 The Concept of Improvising

Improvisation is a vital ingredient of both Lateef’s group and dùndún drum ensemble music. In fact, the melodic content of dùndún is almost entirely improvised during performance. In this situation the *iyáàlù* player is considered the composer of the moment. “The composer of the moment is usually the person leading the ensemble...he is able to create freely while the rest of the musicians act as the supporting cast.”⁶⁵⁴ The concept of composing a new song and rehearsing it with an ensemble before its actual public performance is not typical in the Dùndún tradition.⁶⁵⁵ Thus, “music is transmitted directly from the medium of the mind to the medium of performance. The process is facilitated by the fact that the ‘composer of the moment,’ and the ‘performer of the moment’ are one and the same”⁶⁵⁶ Euba points out that the use of the terms “composer of the moment and performer of the moment imply, first that a performer plays what

⁶⁵³ Berliner *Thinking in Jazz*, 315

⁶⁵⁴ Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 388

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 388

⁶⁵⁶ Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 387

was previously composed by other people, while adding new material of his own. Secondly, that the process of composition takes place spontaneously.”⁶⁵⁷ Because composition does not take place outside of performance it can be assumed that any master musician able to compose is also able to perform, or vice versa.⁶⁵⁸

Although Lateef’s group sometimes rely on melodic lead sheets, it can be said that any musician with the ability to improvise is, in fact, also a composer of the moment. As Berliner points out, “When a [jazz musicians] use the term improvisation, they focus on the degree to which old models are transformed and new ideas are transformed and new ideas created. Typically, they reserve the term improvisation for real-time composing.”⁶⁵⁹ Similar to dundún, the soloist is adding an originally composed section to a piece of music.

There is a common misconception that improvising in music is the act of playing random notes, “picking notes out of thin air.”⁶⁶⁰ For example, *The Encyclopedia Britannica* defines improvisation in music as “the extemporaneous composition or free performance of a musical passage, usually in a manner conforming to certain stylistic norms but unfettered by the prescriptive features of a specific musical text.”⁶⁶¹ *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* defines improvisation as, “the spontaneous creation of music as it is performed. It may involve the immediate composition of an entire work by its performers, or the elaboration or other variation of an existing framework, or anything in between.”⁶⁶²

⁶⁵⁷ Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 387

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 387

⁶⁵⁹ Berliner *Thinking in Jazz*, 221

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 1

⁶⁶¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica*. “Improvisation” .2005. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. 9 Dec. 2005 <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9042225>>.

⁶⁶² Kernfeld, Barry. “Improvisation”, *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 9 December 2005), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

Despite the implications of these definitions, improvisation is not the playing of random notes without any preparation. In fact, quite a bit of preparation and thought goes into constructing an improvised solo before a single note is ever played. *The New Grove* elaborates on its definition, correctly indicating that there are three different improvisational techniques used in jazz improvisation. The first technique “paraphrase improvisation, is the ornamental variation of a theme or some part of it, which remains recognizable.”⁶⁶³ The second technique “formulaic improvisation, is the building of new material from a diverse body of fragmentary ideas.” The final technique “motivic improvisation, is the building of new material through the development of a single fragmentary idea.”⁶⁶⁴ Although all three techniques are frequently used interchangeably throughout a performance and the boundaries separating the three techniques are blurred and overlap, formulaic improvisation provides a common link between the two traditions considered in this chapter.

Taking fragments and ordering them in a unique sequence is the basis on which both hard bop jazz and dũndũn improvisation is constructed. Soloists improvising in both traditions create their spontaneous compositions in a stylistically appropriate form using phrases handed down orally from one generation to the next. In dũndũn improvisation “much of their music consists of previously learned materials.”⁶⁶⁵ The soloist uses previously learned phrases, but “the actual juxtaposition of these units does not follow any preconceived order.”⁶⁶⁶ The soloist must take

⁶⁶³ Barry. “Improvisation”, Grove Music Online

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid*

⁶⁶⁵ Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 393

⁶⁶⁶ Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 393

learned phrases and connect them coherently. It is in the way he connects his phrases that he becomes original.⁶⁶⁷

Likewise when Lateef or his band members solo they are not simply playing notes at random, or even playing an accepted group of notes over specific chord changes in random order. As is common in jazz improvisation, Lateef uses groups of specifically ordered tones as building blocks to move from one harmonic sequence to the next; or in the case of a modal tune, to create motion over the static harmony. Additionally, Lateef does not randomly play these building blocks over the corresponding chord changes. He connects smaller groups of notes in a logical fashion so that they correspond to create larger phrases. The concept is analogous to using letters to spell word, words to build sentences, and sentences to construct paragraphs. A group of logically corresponding paragraphs makes a complete statement; likewise a comprehensible solo will have the same logical progression.

Consider the opening twenty measures of Lateef's solo on "Ayiko, Ayiko" from Art Blakey's, *The African Beat* recording.⁶⁶⁸ In this solo Lateef opens up with a short four note rhythmic phrase, identified in figure 10 as phrase A. He then uses the last three notes of that phrase to begin the next phrase, phrase B, which ends with leading tone into the tonic. It should be pointed out the last four note of phrase be are further related to phrase A as both groups of notes surround the target note.



Figure 16: Opening Phrases of Lateef's solo on "Ayiko, Ayiko"

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 395

⁶⁶⁸ Blakey, *The African Beat*. Blue Note; 1962.

Lateef then latches onto this cadential figure and uses it to end phrases in measures 6, 8, 12, 16, 18, and 20, he uses a closely related figure in measure 10. I have lettered each phrase for identification purposes (See Appendix B for a full transcription). In each instance, excluding measure 10, he varies the way he uses neighbor tones to approach the tonic. In all six instances he ends his phrase on the third beat leaving beat four of the measure silent; however, he varies exactly where he articulates the tonic in the third beat of the measure. He lands directly on beat three once in measure 8, he anticipates beat three by a sixteenth note in measures 12, 16, and 18, and he delays the articulation of the tonic by a sixteenth note in measures 6 and 20. The majority of the phrases have an arching shape to them except for phrase H, which is generally descending. Each phrase is about two measures long; phrase C, D, I and J are relatively self-contained while phrases F and H are responses to phrases E and G. The call-and-response phrases, E-F and G-H are established because Lateef begins, and more importantly ends, phrases E and G on the dominant. Lateef was a master of this type of phrase development and this is an excellent example of the phrasing structure in jazz improvisation.

Lateef's was very fond of using pentatonic scale patterns in his solos during the 1960s, particularly while improvising with the flute and oboe. According to him this is a reference to the music of Northwestern Nigeria. He states, "The basic scale of [Nigerian] music is the pentatonic scale... The pentatonic scale has five tones to the octave i.e., a five-tone scale that has no semi-tones. Properly speaking there is only one such scale (aside from transposition): C D E G A. However, by using different tones as a tonic, five different "MODES" can be derived from

it.”⁶⁶⁹ While music critics suggest that his lack of technique on the flute and oboe restricted Lateef to improvise simple pentatonic-based melodies on his secondary instruments, this is not the case. Lateef had the facility to perform feats of technique on the flute and the oboe, however he restricted much of his improvisation material to pentatonic based melodies as a way to reference West African music, as well as Middle Eastern and Asia folk music, which he was also studying.

Consider his flute solo on “Slippin’ and Slidin.”⁶⁷⁰ The melody of the composition is based on the A minor pentatonic, A C D E G, mode five of the pentatonic scale Lateef describes above. Lateef’s subsequent solo adheres closely to the pentatonic scale, while using other tones in measures 19, 30 and 37. This type of melodic material is quite characteristic of Lateef’s improvisation on both flute and oboe. (See Appendix B for a transcription of Lateef’s solo)

14.1.3 Creativity and Innovation

The ability to present ideas in original and individualized ways and thereby create a recognizable voice in the jazz world is essential for any jazz artist. Every jazz soloist strives to stand out and be noticed for his or her creativity and individuality. In jazz, individuality, having your own sound, is the scale by which all success is measured. In the assessment of a musician’s contribution to the art form, the musician is evaluated by the innovations that he has produced.⁶⁷¹ Many times the development of an original voice is a musician’s passport into the professional

⁶⁶⁹ Lateef, *Hausa Performing Arts and Music*, 195

⁶⁷⁰ Yusef Lateef, *Live At Peps*. Impulse, 1964.

⁶⁷¹ Berliner *Thinking in Jazz*, 273

world. Developing creativity and individuality is by far the ultimate goal of the professional jazz musician. “Imitation, assimilation and innovation” are the three major developmental stages of a jazz artist, according to pianist Walter Bishop Jr.⁶⁷² He maintains that the success of a musician is related to the level of development that musician has reached, and few ever reach the last stage of innovation.

To gain individuality in the jazz tradition, musicians acquire signature traits, which distinguish them from other musicians. The most successful performers acquire a recognizable identity that combines a personalized sound with distinctive vocabulary. Artists develop this identifying sound from countless hours in the practice room. The techniques gained from time so spent provide musicians with a wealth of knowledge that facilitates their ability to converse with fluency and individuality. According to the great jazz pianist and instructor Barry Harris, “the more ways you have of thinking about music, the more things you have to play in your solos.”⁶⁷³ In other words, the more phrases or building blocks a musician has learned, the greater his vocabulary will be, and the better chance he has of sounding original and innovative when improvising.

The development of an individualized sound was something that was important to Lateef. He found his voice in the manipulation of timbre in the use of the saxophone, oboe, and flute. Lateef understood that he had to capture his audience with something special, something different from what other jazz musicians were doing. He states, “The full-time musician requires an audience. It is valid to say that his artistry is molded by the demand or lack of demand for his

⁶⁷² Berliner *Thinking in Jazz*, 273

⁶⁷³ *Ibid*, 146

art.”⁶⁷⁴ This also led Lateef to use many different indigenous African instruments including many hand made flutes and the *algaita* an oboe-like double reed aerophone.⁶⁷⁵

When Lateef first began his recording career in the late 1950s, he was recording every six months for Savoy and Prestige records. He found that using wind instruments from other cultures allowed him to be creative and imaginative; however, in order to continue recording with these instruments Lateef felt he needed a greater understanding of their use within their own culture.⁶⁷⁶ He states, “I began to study other instruments from different cultures. This new pursuit meant I had to spend time in the public library doing the research on Africa, India, Japan, and China.”⁶⁷⁷ Curtis Fuller was performing with Lateef’s group at this time and he remembers Lateef being very interested in the flute and the oboe. Fuller began playing with Lateef in the late 1950s after the two met at Wayne State University in Detroit, and says that Lateef first started playing flute and oboe when the two played together in Detroit. He remembers Lateef being encouraged by Ravi Shankar who had visited Wayne State University and introduced Lateef to different flutes and reed instruments. On the bandstand and in the studio Lateef would have Fuller pound on his back as he played the flute so that he could get a very quick and choppy vibrato.⁶⁷⁸

Returning once again to Lateef’s solo on “Slippin and Slidin” one can see that he occasionally employs the technique of humming while playing his flute. While this technique is sometimes used in contemporary Western classical music, it is also a West African technique used by Fulani and other Northern Nigerian flutists. Lateef was familiar with of these musicians and their music as he studied Fulani music along with other Northern Nigerian music cultures quite

⁶⁷⁴ Lateef, *Hausa Performing Arts and Music*, 194

⁶⁷⁵ Lateef, interview by Squinobal, 2007

⁶⁷⁶ Lateef, Interview by Squinobal 2007

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid*

⁶⁷⁸ Fuller, interview by Squinobal, 2008

extensively. Lateef opens his solo on “Slippin and Slidin” with two hummed phrases during which the flute is only audible on a few notes of the phrase. These two phrases, measures 11-14 again feature a call-and-response. He hums again in a phrase from measure 20-21 and in measure 35. (See Appendix B for a transcription of this solo).

While the technique of humming or singing while playing the flute is quite well displayed in this solo, Lateef also uses it in many other solos, including on his recording of “Psychicemotus” and “Nile Valley Blues.”⁶⁷⁹ Weinstein describes Lateef’s playing on “Nile Valley Blues” he states, “his highly aerated flute tone is occasionally marked by actually singing into the flute...this innovative vocalization has an African precedent noted by Alan Merriam.”⁶⁸⁰ According to Lateef he attempts to infuse “Psychicemotus” with a feeling of West African dance. Lateef describes the piece as “a very demanding composition with an assortment of beguiling textures.”⁶⁸¹ Lateef relies heavily on the use of texture in his music and he links his acute sense of varied texture to that of West Africa.

To some people the oboe may seem out of place in a jazz setting however for Lateef it signified a representation of African Islamic music. According to Nketia “The impact of Islamic and Arabic cultures had a far-reaching influence on many cultures... particularly on those of the savannah belt of West Africa.”⁶⁸² Double reed instruments are found in select places, particularly in places with a strong Islamic tradition, including Chad, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, and Northern Nigeria. This helps to explain Lateef’s use of the oboe in his own music. The many varieties of flutes and double reed instruments in West Africa reflect Lateef’s own interest in these

⁶⁷⁹ Yusef Lateef, *Psychicemotus*. Impulse, 1965; and Yusef Lateef, *A Flat, G Flat, and C*, Impulse Records, 1966.

⁶⁸⁰ Weinstein, *A Night in Tunisia*, 151

⁶⁸¹ Lateef *Gentle Giant*,

⁶⁸² Nketia, *The Music of African*, 9

instruments. The double reed instruments in northern Nigeria are strongly influenced by Islamic tradition.

In Lateef's improvised introduction to "Sister Mamie" he plays his *algaita* with a tonal production, melodic phrasing, and improvisational style that is similar to the way the instrument is used in Islamic West Africa.⁶⁸³ He limits his solo to the pitches D F G A C, the D minor pentatonic, and he slides from one pitch to another. In some instances the portamenti are quick and short and at other times they are longer and drawn out. When compared with the *algaita* music of Northern Nigeria, (e.g. traditional song "Malleeri" performed by a Fulani *algaita* player see figure 17.) the two are strikingly similar.⁶⁸⁴ "Malleeri" is more repetitious than "Sister Mamie" but has the same connected portamento effect of moving from pitch to pitch and is also minor pentatonic.⁶⁸⁵ (See Appendix B for a transcription of Lateef's solo).

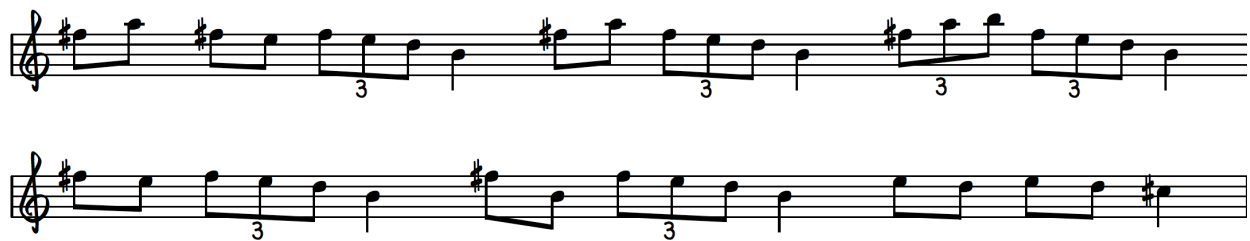


Figure 17: Hausa traditional song "Malleeri" performed on *algaita* a double reed instrument

Creativity and innovation are equally sought after in the dundún tradition. "The soloist is for the most part performing what has been passed down from generation to generation; only a

⁶⁸³ Yusef Lateef, *Live At Peps*. Impulse, 1964.

⁶⁸⁴ Fulani Traditional Musicians, *Niger/ Northern Dahomey, Music of the Fulani*, Unesco, 1995.

⁶⁸⁵ When played for ethnomusicologist, Sister Marie Agatha, a specialist in Nigerian music, she instantly identified Lateef's use of the *algaita*. Lateef's phrasing and sound production was accurate enough that she could not believe that he was not a traditional Hausa musician performing with the jazz ensemble. She identified his playing instantly as being very influenced by Islamic West Africa. (Sister Marie Agatha, personal communication, 2009)

very small part of his creativity can be considered his own.”⁶⁸⁶ However, Euba suggests that obtaining a certain level of creativity and innovation is looked upon as favorably in dùndún music as it is in jazz. In regards to the innovation of musical techniques by dùndún musicians Euba states, “The music which a given artist performs consists of what he learnt from his teacher, usually his father, which is ‘interpreted’ in his own way and, if he is sufficiently creative, supplemented with innovations of his own.”⁶⁸⁷ We may assume from this example that innovation by individual soloists in the dùndún tradition is as rare as it is in jazz. This may be due to the fact that “In most cases, the composer himself is the first person to perform whatever he creates, and other people may learn his innovations only after they have been realized in performance.”⁶⁸⁸

14.1.4 Developing a Vocabulary

In the Yoruba tradition, sons inherit their professions from their fathers; sons of weavers become weavers and sons of musicians become musicians. It is common for young musicians to learn to play all of the *omele* instruments before graduating to the lead instrument, *iyáàlù*. In fact, many *omele* musicians will develop into master drummers but must relegate themselves to the supporting cast until it is their time to lead.⁶⁸⁹ During apprenticeship, students will become familiar with the praise poetry and phrase texts that their teachers play. They will usually learn each phrase by mimicking their teacher and build their vocabulary one phrase at a time. Students

⁶⁸⁶ Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 394

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 394

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 387

⁶⁸⁹ Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 390

will also try to learn new phrases while accompanying master drummers in performance. “If the *iyáàlù* says something that [a young musician] does not understand, he asks the player to interpret it and so gradually builds up a repertoire of drum texts.”⁶⁹⁰ Techniques inherited from a teacher also contain what the teacher’s teachers have learned.⁶⁹¹ Thus, the tradition is carried on orally from father to son, passing with it the techniques and skills developed from past generations. However, no soloist can know all of the existing text phrases; and so his uniquely learned set of phrases causes his playing to be distinctive.⁶⁹²

The students of *dùndún* and students of jazz tradition have dissimilar ways of developing a vocabulary. In the *dùndún* tradition young students are taught phrases in their entirety, not broken down note by note. In a sense, it is like learning whole sentences at a time, not letter-by-letter or word-by-word.⁶⁹³ In contrast, jazz musicians begin by learning the notes of an instrument (their letters), then scales, and finally phrases. This may be due to the fact that they must consider the rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic aspects of improvisation while learning their phrases, while drum texts rely on the rhythmic and tonal aspects of speech. However, I suspect that it also has to do with the institutionalization of music education in America and the weight given to Western Classical music educational techniques as well. By this, I mean that many teachers will insist that musicians learn the proper technique of their instruments, including notes, scales, and arpeggios before moving on to the next level of jazz vocabulary. Young

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 105

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid*, 394

⁶⁹² *Ibid*, 395

⁶⁹³ Sihma Arom, *African Polyphony and Polyrhythm: Musical Structure and Methodology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. 207

dùndún musicians learn much of their required technique during performance experiences in the *omele*.⁶⁹⁴

Once a student of jazz has learned the preliminary techniques required to become proficient on their instruments, they too begin to learn whole phrases. However, the concept of phrase vocabulary in jazz is somewhat different than it is in dùndún. While dùndún students must learn the proper text phrases for different performance occasions, jazz musicians must learn the proper melodic phrases to be played over different harmonic progressions. Jazz has developed specific harmonic progressions that are found frequently throughout the genre. For instance, the ii7-V7- I chord progression. This common chord progression may be found in any of the twelve major keys. Additionally there is a different type of ii7-V7-i progression for all twelve minor keys. Thus, a jazz improviser must learn each vocabulary phrase in all twelve major keys and a different vocabulary phrase in all twelve minor keys. This is just one example of the meticulously systematic nature of the jazz vocabulary.

Lateef first received formal musical training in high school at the time he was playing alto saxophone. He switched to tenor saxophone after hearing the great tenors of the swing era including the previously mentioned Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Chu Berry, and Gene Ammons among others. He listened intently to all of the early tenor masters and acquired a sound concept that reflected the older tenor sound. Specifically, Lateef's tenor sound became broad and gruff referencing the sound of Hawkins. One of the first jazz recordings he owned was Hawkins' famed recording of "Body and Soul." He listened and played along with

⁶⁹⁴ Euba , *Yoruba Drumming*, 104

that record so many times that he wore out the grooves in the record.⁶⁹⁵ Elements of Hawkins' sound can be best heard in Lateef's ballad performances.

Lateef also acquired several tonal and timbral manipulations for the tenor saxophone. For these timbral changes he most often uses false fingerings, influenced by the playing of Lester Young. Like his use of uncommon wind instruments, his timbral manipulation on his tone is a way for Lateef to connect with West African traditional music. A singular pure tone is quite uncommon in West African music, as has been stated previously in this study; however, the importance of a complex, multilayered, and varying tone for West African instruments is one of the most overlooked identifying characteristics. When studying different wind instruments from Africa in the Detroit library and on trips to Africa, Lateef recognized the importance of this characteristic and employed it often on his 1960 recordings. In his solo on "Ayiko Ayiko" recorded on Art Blakey's *The African Beat* he employs many different tonal manipulation techniques. It is not surprising that we find many different techniques employed in this track as Lateef tried to incorporate his tenor sound into this West African-inspired song. In this solo Lateef uses a false fingering to create two different tonal characteristics of a concert F, transposed to a G on the tenor sax. He does this by fingering a regular G and alternating that with a G produced by fingering a low C and blowing a twelfth above. You will notice that he overblows on beat four of measure 21, (at the 1:39 mark on the recording) and produces the C above the intended G. The difference in tone is created because the G with the C fingering travels a further distance through the saxophone before sounding, as a result tone contains undertones of the fundamental, the C, and is often characterized as sounding thicker than the regular G.

⁶⁹⁵ Lateef Interview by Squinobal 2007, also found in Lateef *Gentle Giant*

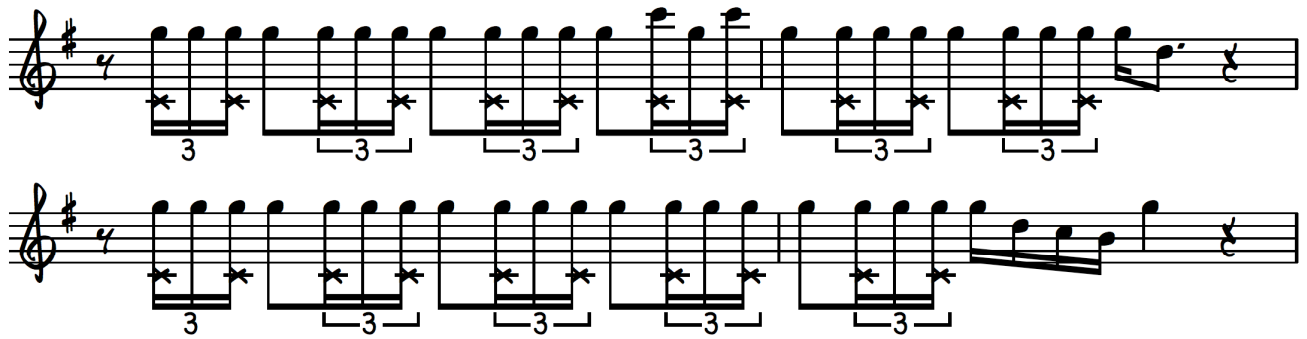


Figure 18: Lateef's use of false fingerings.

Lateef also uses the overtone series on C to produce a multiphonic tone at the 2:16 mark on the recording. He does this again by overblowing, yet this time he manipulates the tone so that it quickly alternates between two of the overtones, which gives the impression that he is producing two notes at the same time.



Figure 19: Lateef's use of multiphonics

Lateef uses a slap tongue technique to produce a percussive sound on his tenor, at the 3:32 mark on the recording. There is very little pitch produced with this technique and the effect is used for percussive purposes.



Figure 20: Lateef's use of slap tongue technique

Equally identifiable in Lateef's saxophone improvisation vocabulary are blues infused phrasing and his use of conventional bebop vocabulary. His bluesy tenor lines are drawn from tenor players like Gene Ammons and Sonny Stitt. Lateef's use of the blues in his phrasing includes playing the flatted third, fifth and seventh tones over both dominant and major chords to produce the sound of the blues scale. Examples of this can be seen in many different solos. In "Ayiko Ayiko," which is basically a V7-I vamp Lateef sporadically employs an F natural over both the D7 and G major chord.



Figure 21: Lateef's use of the flatted seventh over major harmony

While Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker made bebop vocabulary famous, Lateef likely learned to play bebop by practicing with Stitt and bop guru Barry Harris in Detroit.⁶⁹⁶ Lateef's bebop vocabulary includes approach-note systems, arpeggiated seventh chords (most often from the root and third), and passing tones added usually between the root and flat seventh on

⁶⁹⁶ Lateef, *Gentle Giant*, 40

descending scale segments. All of these musical elements can be seen in his solo on “Oscarlypso.”⁶⁹⁷ Lateef opens his solo with a group of approach notes including an upper neighbor and leading tone that surround the tonic. Other examples of approach note systems are found in measures 3, 5, 9, and 15. Lateef uses arpeggiated seventh chords in measures 18, and 24 and passing tones in measures 2, and 8. Beginning in measure 27 he takes a short four-note motif and transposes it down in sequence, with slight variation 4 times. All of these musical elements are common bebop techniques and Lateef uses them to great effect. (See Appendix B for a transcription of this solo).

While the development of an improvisation vocabulary in dũndũn differs from that of jazz improvisation vocabulary, the use of the developed vocabulary in each style is quite similar. Jazz and dũndũn musicians alike must connect their vocabulary building blocks in a logical and fluent manner so that smaller building blocks create larger phrases, which in turn constitute complete performances. In some instances in dũndũn music, “Dũndũn drummers often truncate a textual phrase in order to make room, rhythmically, for a succeeding phrase.”⁶⁹⁸ This “dovetailing” of phrases is common in jazz when musicians try to move from one phrase to another fluidly, it is also common in notated compositions in both Western classical music and the jazz tradition.

14.1.5 Performance preparation

Performance preparation may be one of the biggest differences between the two traditions. In the dũndũn tradition, songs are instantly identifiable by the master drummer’s

⁶⁹⁷ Yusef Lateef, *Live At Peps*. Impulse, 1964.

⁶⁹⁸ Euba “Ilu Esu,” 136

introductory phrases. The *omele* players will know what song the master drummer intends to play by the circumstances of the performance and the opening phrases the *iyààlù* plays, instantly the rest of the ensemble will begin to play. Therefore, *dùndún* players do not seem to plan out their performance material, the order of compositions, or drum texts.⁶⁹⁹ The *omele* musicians follow the leader in a natural progression of songs and texts throughout the performance.

In contrast, the pre-performance practices of jazz musicians are more varied. In jam sessions, there is no pre-performance preparation among musicians. Members participating in the jam session will simply call a song that they all know and the piece will begin. However, young performers in anticipation of going to a jam session will mentally prepare a list of songs that they are comfortable playing before they get to the jam session.⁷⁰⁰ On the other hand, there are also situations many piano trios for example, when the musicians have been playing with each other for such a long time and are so comfortable with each other that they will not pre-plan what they perform during a concert. The leader of the group will just begin to play the introduction of the song and the rest of the musicians will enter soon after, much in the same way that *dùndún* songs are begun. Examples of these groups include Ahmad Jamal's trio, and Keith Jarrett's trio. However, many jazz musicians prepare a set list before their concert. This is perhaps due to the fact that many groups perform with a combination of written and memorized music and in order to prepare the written materials, musicians must know what to expect.

⁶⁹⁹ Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 390

⁷⁰⁰ When I was in high school and in college I would always make a mental note of songs that I felt comfortable playing with unfamiliar musicians. When going to a jam session it is often the case that you don't always know the people you are playing with. In such situations improvisers like to feel as comfortable with the material they are playing as possible. As I have become more confident with my playing and my knowledge of tunes has grown, I prepare less for impromptu jam sessions because I know what to expect from other musicians and I am better prepared to handle the unexpected.

In both traditions, audience interaction plays an important role in adding to the inspiration of the soloist, and presumably all of the musicians involved in the performance. As Euba suggests, “A well-attended dùndún occasion, at which much dancing takes place and at which the musicians are loudly acclaimed and showered with gifts of money, is likely to inspire dùndún players to profound depths of creativity.”⁷⁰¹

In certain venues, jazz musicians also feel inspired. “The audience can energize the improviser.”⁷⁰² This energized feeling can lead to a level of creativity that the musicians have not previously reached. The audience may influence the creative energy of the improviser directly, or they may affect the musician, “on the periphery of his consciousness, remaining nevertheless, a powerful motivation force.”⁷⁰³ In the latter instance, the soloist may not recognize that the audience has inspired him. However, bandleaders are well aware of the effects live performance has on creative musicians and this is one reason live jazz recordings are so popular. Lateef’s, *Live at Peps* recorded in Philadelphia in 1964, is the most creative and energetic album recorded for the *Impulse* record label. Many of the musical examples in this analysis are taken from that recording.

I have used this comparison as a way to connect Lateef’s music to West African traditional music. Yoruba dùndún music is one of many diverse instrumental music styles in West Africa, it contains elements that are specific to the dùndún traditional, but it also contains characteristics found in many different West African instrumental musics. Lateef’s group embodied many of these same characteristics, including a steady, predictable background, reliance on shared vocabulary of phrases, with creativity and innovation being privileged.

⁷⁰¹ Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*, 390

⁷⁰² Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, 469

⁷⁰³ *Ibid*, 469

Although Yoruba òṣun ensembles and Lateef's hard bop group are worlds apart, they share these common bonds. Some may say that this is because that òṣun is a West African traditional music and Lateef's jazz group is an African American music and therefore the two are undeniably linked. This is true; however I would also argue that Lateef intentionally sought to cultivate and integrate general elements of West African traditional music into his own jazz performance. Although the development of a stylistically acceptable vocabulary is essential for improvising musicians like Lateef, his capacity to be creative and innovative by molding old traditions with new concepts is what sets him apart.

15.0 THE MASTER DRUMMER: ART BLAKEY AND HIS MUSIC

Blakey's ensembles became a finishing school for the young musicians he hired, from his first ensemble in New York, *The Seventeen Messengers*, up through the last version of the Messengers before he died on October 16, 1990. Robin Tomens succinctly describes Blakey's Jazz Messengers as a school, stating that eventually musicians "would escape to make other kinds of music, leaving Art back there, on his stool, still welcoming new pupils, still keeping faith with his hard bop."⁷⁰⁴ Blakey hired young promising musicians and when they hit their stride they either left the band or he sent them on their way. As stated earlier, he had received the same mentoring from Dizzy Gillespie in the Billy Eckstine band; the impact that band had on him stayed with Blakey for the rest of his life. Blakey led by example and tried to influence his musicians. He states "I don't tell [my sidemen] what to play—I tell them what not to play: don't try to play everything you know in one chorus; don't try to make a career out of one tune."⁷⁰⁵ According to pianist Bobby Timmons, a former Blakey sideman, one of Blakey's most important qualities is his ability to educate his young sidemen to become future leaders themselves. Timmons states, "He's a leader who builds leaders. That little speech he gives at the end of his sets, about how jazz is our native cultural contribution to the world. Who else could get away

⁷⁰⁴ Tomens, Robin. *Points of Departure: Essays on Modern Jazz*. (Exeter, Devon; Londonderry, N.H.: Stride, 2001.) 123

⁷⁰⁵ Alan Goldsher, *Hard Bop Academy: The Sidemen of Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers*, (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corp., 2002) 3-4

with that speech?”⁷⁰⁶ Jackie McLean, who spent a year playing with Art Blakey, identifies Blakey’s ability to teach and guide young musicians as his most important. McLean states, “I learned how to grow up and be a man around Art. He was an incredible individual, and a wonderful bandleader. He had a fatherly role that he played as a bandleader...and he was very much into bringing young musicians into his band and helping them develop.”⁷⁰⁷ When Curtis Fuller joined Blakey’s group, Blakey was living in an apartment building with many different musicians included Herbie Hancock, Coleman Hawkins, Max Roach, and Elvin Jones. Blakey’s apartment made up a whole floor and was big enough to have a small apartment within it. Wayne Shorter was just moving out of Blakey’s apartment when Blakey had Curtis move in. Once Fuller was living in the apartment and playing in his group, Blakey had younger musicians like Freddie Hubbard stay with Fuller in his small apartment when they needed a place to stay.⁷⁰⁸

According to Blakey he gives more credit to his students, his sidemen, than to himself as a teacher: “I think it’s them, the musicians, who do it themselves. I think all you have to do is give them an opportunity and some kind of direction, just let them play.”⁷⁰⁹ Nathan Davis, who played with Blakey on a few gigs in Europe, states that Blakey “was a strong leader and he knew exactly what he wanted to do. But at the same time, I’ve seen him so gentle with people.”⁷¹⁰ As an example of Blakey’s willingness to promote his young musicians and to encourage them to succeed as future bandleaders, Davis relates a conversation he and Blakey had. According to Davis, in an attempt to hire him fulltime. Blakey said, “Davis, I’m offering you the same deal that Wayne [Shorter] had, and everything we record is yours. You call the shots, you write all the

⁷⁰⁶ Rosenthal, “Conversation with Art Blakey,” 270

⁷⁰⁷ Goldsher, *Hard Bop Academy*, 54

⁷⁰⁸ Fuller, interview by Squinobal, 2008

⁷⁰⁹ Rosenthal, “Conversation with Art Blakey,” 279

⁷¹⁰ Albus, *Paris Pittsburgh*, 110

music. It's a good chance for you.”⁷¹¹ The learning community that Blakey created for his young musicians is very similar to the communal aspects of West African traditional cultures where sons inherit the family occupation, and fathers teach their sons how to be musicians.⁷¹² In fact, in many West African musical traditions Blakey would be called a master drummer.

15.1 THE ROLE OF THE MASTER DRUMMER IN TRADITIONAL AFRICAN MUSIC

The well-known drum ensembles of West Africa are comprised of secondary or accompanying musicians and a leader or master drummer. According to Nketia, “secondary drummers are those who usually fill in the music with persistent contrasting rhythms or those who underline the basic beats or provide the ‘ground’ of the music, while the master drummers are those who give the music its fullness and quite often its distinctive character.”⁷¹³ Secondary musicians not only play drums but also shakers, bells, sticks, or clap hands depending on the availability of the instruments and the requirements of the ensemble.

West African master drummers, the leaders of the drum and dance ensembles, are some of the most respected West African traditional musicians. The master drummer provides direction for the other musicians. Locke states, “The principal function of the leading drum are 1) playing the traditional rhythms...of a musical type; and 2) playing rhythms which provide

⁷¹¹ Albus, *Paris Pittsburgh*, 105

⁷¹² See Nketia, *Music in Africa*; Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*

⁷¹³ Nketia, *Drumming in Akan Communities of Ghana*, 153

choreographic signals for the dancers.”⁷¹⁴ Nketia states, “Secondary drummers must look to the master drummer, for it is usually the master drummer who ‘conducts’ the performance of the whole orchestra. The master drummer calls for the gong to sound so that all others may come in.”⁷¹⁵ He continues, “If a cue for ending the music is not embodied in the music itself, it may be given by the master drummer.”⁷¹⁶

The master drummer provides the solo line of the music. His improvisation, which is often pertinent drum text, sometimes coincides with what the accompanying parts play and at other times creates rhythmic tension. “The interplay of leader and performers gives rise to sectional arrangement of pieces: in songs, it results in alternation of solo and chorus or antiphonal call-and-response; in drumming, the contrasting parts of the master drummer and one or more of the secondary drummer...”⁷¹⁷ Locke states, “The lead drummer balances static and dynamic musical elements: he plays phrases appropriate to the piece and improvises upon them in stylistically acceptable ways.”⁷¹⁸ On the role of the master drummer, Jones states, the master drummer is “forever changing the patterns, sometimes playing duple, sometimes triple time, sometimes using some rhythmic figure which fits into neither of these simple time divisions. As to the other drums, one sticks to a simple rhythm and never varies throughout; the other may have perhaps two rhythm patterns of a similar nature...”⁷¹⁹

It is vitally important to understand that in many situations the master drummer, while improvising, is performing very specific drum texts. These texts are recognizable to anyone

⁷¹⁴ Locke, *The Music of Atsiagbeko*, 318

⁷¹⁵ Nketia, *Drumming in Akan Communities of Ghana*, 153

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid*, 153

⁷¹⁷ Nketia, *African Music in Ghana*, 108

⁷¹⁸ Locke, *Drum Gahu*, 75

⁷¹⁹ Jones, “African Rhythm,” 39

familiar with the material, and it is through these texts that talking drums communicate the the audience. Locke highlights the difference between simply performing an improvised drum solo and the significance of the drum text the master drummer always takes into consideration. He states, “Lead drumming is a form of story telling. [The master drummer] does not use ideas about patterning of pure sound to construct his improvisation, he sings his story on the drum! Sound that to an outsider seems to be abstract rhythm has meaning in the vernacular to an Ewe.”⁷²⁰ Furthermore:

“The music of the lead drum has a melodic quality; the timbral/tonal contrast between successive strokes and the contour of relative pitches within a phrase are integral to the lead drummer’s art...Besides their concern for the timbre and tone of drum strokes, lead drummers obviously give careful attention to the timing of strokes. Although timing might seem to be primarily a matter of attack—the moment a stroke is made—the duration of a tone is also carefully controlled.”⁷²¹

These statements are significant in that they describe accurately the way that Art Blakey interacts with his fellow musicians. This can be seen very plainly in the drum ensemble recordings in which Blakey performs with other percussionists. Although Blakey did not learn the actual drum texts for the phrases he performed, his utilization of them as inspirational music provides an important link to West African traditional music. Locke identifies specific ways that master drummers create variation in their solo drumming. These include altering their stroke type, adding ornamentation, creating segmentation, using repetition and timing displacement. Others include filling or emptying musical space, rephrasing previously played material, creating metric modulations, and changes in dynamics and accentuation. Blakey employed many of these techniques in his improvised solos.

⁷²⁰ Locke, *Drum Gahu*, 7

⁷²¹ Locke, *Drum Gahu*, 73

15.2 BLAKEY THE MASTER DRUMMER

Blakey's focus on incorporating drum ensemble music into his own music is logical because he is a drummer. When surrounded by drummers and percussionists he felt empowered. His predisposition to mentor and his strong leadership abilities meant that he took on the role of master drummer in his large drum and percussion ensembles. His solos in these situations bring to mind those of a master drummer as he frequently works with the lower sounds of his drum kit, the low toms and bass drum. The larger drumheads have less tension and are easier to bend making their pitches easier to manipulate. (Many of the master drums in West African societies, particularly those in Ghana, are low resonant drums.) While Blakey does incorporate his snare drum into his solos it is the use of the lower drums that evokes the master drummers of the Akan, Ga, and Ewe people of Ghana.

There are many instances in which Blakey takes charge; he is out in front of the ensemble leading the way (examples of this will be shown below). However, at other times he seems almost hesitant and unsure of exactly what to add to the ensemble. According to Blakey, the desire of drummers to always outdo one another and to hog the limelight was one of the frustrating aspects of playing with multiple drummers and percussionists.

15.2.1 "Ifé L'ayo"

One example of his tasteful restraint, can be found on "Ifé L'ayo."⁷²² The song opens with a gong crash and Blakey playing a solo introduction. The opening melody is then performed

⁷²² Art Blakey, *The African Beat*, Blue Note, 1962.

on Solomon Ilori's penny whistle followed by the entrance of Lateef's flute in harmony and Abul-Malik's bouncing bass line. By the time the melody is repeated again all of the percussion section is at full force, except for Blakey. He enters again in measure 39, at the 1:40 mark on the recording, and adds only a ride pattern for 16 measures. He then abruptly ends his ride pattern and although it is hard to distinguish, I believe he takes up the time line pattern with a cross stick on the snare. His part then blends into the background until his solo after the penny whistle solo. After his solo the melody is restated and he again plays the ride pattern, this time adding beats two and four on the high-hat as well, and plays it assertively for the remainder of the song. (See Appendix C for the transcription of this song)

The pennywhistle melody is a common highlife melody that resembles traditional folk music from Northern Nigeria and Southern Ghana. While listening to this melody, Sister Mary Agatha, who is Igbo, noted that the melody resembles those she heard as a child growing up in Nigeria.⁷²³ The composer, Solomon Ilori, is Yoruba and the melody is most likely drawn from the traditional folk music of the Yoruba. Yet Ewe musician and scholar Kofi Gbolonyo states that the pennywhistle melody, doubled on flute by Lateef, is a popular Ghanaian melody from Akan and Ewe traditions.⁷²⁴ It may that Ilori, a popular highlife musician, initially learned this melody from Ghanaian highlife musicians or acquired the melody while he was performing in Ghana and appropriated it.

Many of the supporting instruments on the song "Ife L'ayo" perform rhythms common found in many West African drum ensembles. Agatha suggests that they are generic enough to be used in many different traditional settings. The rhythms reminded her of the rhythms that

⁷²³ Sister Marie Agatha, interview by Squinobal 2009

⁷²⁴ Kofi Gbolonyo, interview by Squinobal 2009

accompany Nigerian gospels. In the performance of these gospels the melodies and text will often change but the rhythmic accompaniment provides very general polyrhythmic aspects that are malleable and fit many different situations.⁷²⁵

The high drum plays an offbeat triplet figure, a rhythm that is often played by the *kaganu* drum in Ewe dance music, (figure 22). This rhythm is performed in *Agbadza*, *Agbeko*, *Desrõ La Fe Cantata*, *Gadzo*, and *Togo Astia* dance drum styles among others. It is also found in the Fon/Ewe, *Yeve* and the Ashianti, *Adowa* (*apentamma* drum part) dance drum styles.



Figure 22: The High drum part; an often-used Ewe *Kaganu* drum pattern

A second drum part performs a rhythm similar to the *donno* drum parts in the Ashanti, *Adowa* and the high *tamalin* part of the Akan, *Asaadua* dance drum styles. A variation of this rhythm is also found in the *donno* part of the Ewe *Boboobo* dance rhythm.

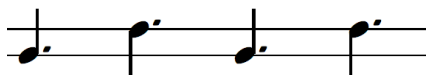


Figure 23: One of the low drum parts; an often-used *donno* and *tamalin* drum pattern

When listening to this track, Gbolonyo, points out that, although the *kaganu* is found in many different dance drum styles, this example is *Agbadza* because of the way that the *kaganu* rhythm interacts with the bell pattern and the rattle rhythm. While the other rhythms are very generic drum patterns and not necessarily found in this drumming style, the distinctive rattle, bell

⁷²⁵ Agatha, interview by Squinobal 2009

pattern and *kaganu* supporting part were enough for Gbolonyo to instantly identify the *Agbadza* dance drum style.

15.2.2 “Tobi Ilu”

In contrast to the reserved role Blakey plays in “Ifé L’ayo” his performance on “Tobi Ilu” is confident and strong throughout.⁷²⁶ A showcase for Blakey, perhaps he is able to play with even more strength and confidence because there is no melody or horn part to take into consideration, and his drum solo takes center stage. The piece begins with a solo *mbira* introduction; after these eight measures the *mbira* is not heard from again. The supporting drums enter after a brief pause. The high drum enters first playing another common variation of a *kaganu* supporting rhythm.



Figure 24: The high drum part, a often used Ewe *kaganu* drum pattern

The second drum plays a continuous stream of notes that I have notated as sixteenth notes. This rhythm is commonly found in the *kidi* and *kaganu* parts of Ewe drum music. When this rhythm is performed on the *kidi* drum some of the attacks are muted giving nuance to the rhythm and changing the timbre of the pattern; when it is performed on *kaganu*, all of the attacks are open toned notes.

⁷²⁶ Art Blakey, *The African Beat*, Blue Note, 1962.

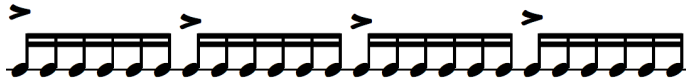


Figure 25: The low drum part: a *kidi* and *kaganu* drum rhythm

Blakey performs the time line on his hi-hat. He performs the standard time pattern in an orientation that is found in numerous West African drumming styles but is most associated with southern Ghana and Ewe drumming in particular. Blakey turns the time line around briefly in measure 13, at the 0:34 mark on the recording, reorienting the second half of the phrase so that it coincides with a strike of his low tom. When arranged together, the orientation of the Ewe time line with the two supporting drums reference the drum rhythms from the *Hatsiatsia* Ewe drumming style. An Ewe performance drumming style of music, *Hatsiatsia* literally means, “in between drumming (or dance) styles.”⁷²⁷ It is performed in between dance and drumming songs during longer ceremonies. The second drum, playing a continuous stream of sixteenth notes, is the primary *kaganu* part found in *Hatsiatsia* while the first drum, the higher part, plays a rhythm that is similar to one of the *kaganu* response phrases performed in response to the master drum cue. The fact that the two are performed together shows that the musicians were familiar with the style but perhaps not completely familiar with the specific Ewe role of the secondary rhythms.

During his solo Blakey imitates the master drum part often performed on *atsimevu* or *sogo* when these drums act as the master drum.⁷²⁸ Gbolonyo states that the patterns Blakey performs, especially at the beginning of his solo, imitate what the master drummer would

⁷²⁷ Hartigan “Blood Drum Spirit,” 319

⁷²⁸ Gbolonyo, interview by Squinobal, 2009

perform during *Hatsiatsia*, though at a much more condensed pace. (See Appendix C for a transcription of this piece)

Gbolonyo describes this piece as imitating Ewe performance drumming. For example, the triplets beginning in measure 18, at the 0:45 mark on the recording, on first the high tom and then the low tom are a well known signal used by master drummers to inform the supporting drummers to change their patterns or for dancers to change their dance steps. The supporting drums play their parts as accurately as Ewe drummers would, however they do not respond to Blakey's cue by playing a variation of their patterns. Blakey does play some of the master drum patterns associated with *Hatsiasita* however Gbolonyo states that as Blakey begins to develop his improvisation he plays rhythms that clash with the supporting drums more than an Ewe master drummer would allow them to clash. While these musicians do not stick strictly to traditional West African patterns, they create enough polyrhythm and rhythmic interaction to interest traditional musicians like Gbolonyo who states that, "although this is not authentic drumming it is exciting and would hold an Ewe's interest."⁷²⁹

In this solo Blakey applies many of the techniques identified by Locke above. Blakey develops a motif and uses space effectively in his solo by presenting a short phrase and manipulating the phrase metrically. The phrase Blakey manipulates is the same phrase Gbolonyo identifies as one often played by Ewe master drummers. The motif appears first in measure 15 and he immediately begins displacing the phrase rhythmically. Blakey always begins the phrase on the quarter note beat, however he always starts it on a different quarter note within the duration of the time cycle. The first time it starts on the second quarter note of the measure, then in measure 16 he begins the motif on the fourth quarter note. He then plays a series of triplets,

⁷²⁹ Gbolonyo, interview by Squinobal, 2009

the previously mentioned master drum cue, on the high tom and low tom and finishes the phrase with the motif beginning on the third quarter note in measure 20. He starts the phrase again in measure 21, this time on the fifth quarter note. The phrase appears again at the end of a phrase in measure 28, this time beginning on the fourth quarter note.⁷³⁰ Blakey then turns his focus to his snare for a few measure but returns to the original motif in measure 35, beginning on the fourth quarter note, playing bass drum, floor tom, and a crash cymbal together. He continues to use this instrument grouping and for the first time varies the rhythm of the motif. In contrast to many of the drum solos found in “conventional” or straight-ahead songs recorded by Blakey, in this solo he utilizes space effectively by providing more rests between phrases. This may be because he is able to let the supporting instruments provide some of the polyrhythmic texture of the music, which frees him up to provide a melodically themed solo.

15.2.3 “Ayiko Ayiko”

The song “Ayiko Ayiko” recorded on Blakey’s *The African Beat* album is a popular Ghanaian highlife tune of which only a small section is used in Blakey’s performance. The lyrics, like many highlife songs, are a combination of different southern Ghanaian languages. The call: “Ayiko Ayiko Malam Djole Ayiko” can be translated “Welcome, welcome my dear one, welcome.” The response: “Ya Ya, Ayiko, Malam Djole Ayiko” is translated “Yes, yes welcome my dear one welcome.” The second call, “Ayiko, Ya Yea Malam Djole Ayiko” is similar to the first “Welcome, yes my dear one welcome.”⁷³¹ According to Gbolonyo, the word ‘Ayiko’ meaning ‘welcome’ is found throughout southern Ghana. The word ‘Malam’ is

⁷³⁰ Much of this phrase is indistinguishable as it blends into the attacks of the other drums.

⁷³¹ Translation by Kofi Gbolonyo, interview by Squinobal, 2009

originally from the Hausa and means ‘spiritual leader’ or ‘healer.’ ‘Djole’ is from the Ga and is a term of affection meaning ‘dear one.’ When used together, the words, ‘Malam Djole’ function as though the singers are addressing someone respected and dear to them.

When transcribing Lateef’s solo on “Ayiko Ayiko” I noticed that there was a palpable unsettledness in the percussion and rhythm section at the beginning of piece. The song begins with what appears to be the *Sikyi* dance rhythm from the Ashanti people of central Ghana. The *Sikyi* rhythm was originally performed as a recreational dance rhythm that is themed on social flirting between females and males.⁷³² The *Sikyi* bell pattern is also commonly found in Ghanaian highlife music.



Figure 26: *Sikyi* Bell Pattern, often found in highlife music

As I began to transcribe the rhythm section I noticed that there appears to be a bit of uncertainty as to the orientation of the time line. The opening bars are oriented as they would be for *Sikyi*, yet there is a bit of urgency created by playing some of the hand drum parts slightly ahead of the beat, which is common in *Sikyi* and many other West African dance drumming.⁷³³ This sense of urgency creates a bit of uncertainty in the opening of the piece and some of the African American musicians are unsure of where the downbeat is. In fact, it is not until Amed Abdul-Malik enters with the bass line that the group really seems to settle into a steady groove. (See Appendix C for the transcription of this song)

⁷³² Hartigan, “Blood Drum Spirit,” 482

⁷³³ *Ibid*, 483

Instead of orienting the rhythm as it is most often oriented in *Sikyi* and in highlife, (see figure 26) the timeline for “Ayiko Ayiko” shifts its position over two beats (see figure 27.) Even more surprising, Blakey does not seem to find a comfort zone until after the melody is finished. By the time Lateef’s solo begins, the time line is drowned out by Blakey’s hi-hat, which is articulated on every beat. One may argue that Blakey is attempting to provide his own unique interpretation of a well-known African dance rhythm; however I believe this is a case of members of Blakey’s band being unfamiliar with the rhythmic orientation of the *Sikyi* bell pattern.

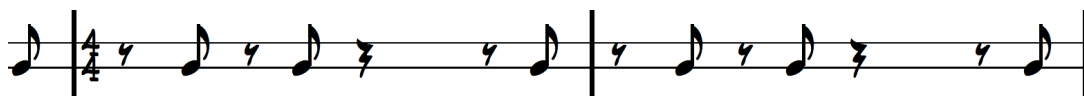


Figure 27: Sikyi or Highlife bell pattern shifted two beats for “Ayiko Ayiko”

In a conversation with Gbolonyo, an Ewe percussionist who is very familiar with the *Sikyi* dance rhythm, he states that if the rhythm section uses the supporting parts of the *Sikyi* dance rhythm then the bell pattern must be oriented in a very specific way. The supporting instruments play rhythmic patterns that are similar to *Sikyi* rhythms but not exact. The first drum that enters plays a rhythm that is very similar to the high *tamalin* part. Figure 28 shows the high *tamalin* drum rhythm on the top line, line A, and the rhythm played on the first drum on “Ayiko Ayiko” on the second line, line B.

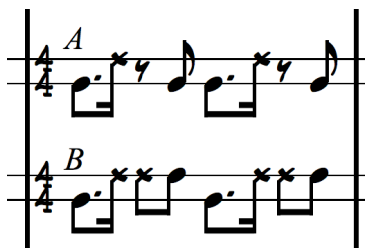


Figure 28: line A-high *tamalin* *Sikyi* rhythm, line B-high drum in “Ayiko Ayiko”

The second drum to enter on “Ayiko Ayiko” plays a rhythm that may be interpreted as a combination of the *Sikyi* rhythms performed by the medium and low *tamalin* parts. Figure 29 shows the medium *tamalin* rhythm on the first line, line A, the low *tamalin* on the second line, line B, and the rhythm played on “Ayiko, Ayiko” on the bottom line, line C. Comparing these rhythms, it becomes evident that, while the medium *tamalin* pattern changes in the second half of the measure, the rhythm played on the Blakey recording stays consistently the same. Secondly, while the medium and low *tamalin* contain both open and muted tones, the rhythm used on “Ayiko, Ayiko” contains only open tones.



Figure 29: Line A-medium *tamalin* *Sikyi* rhythm, line B-low *tamalin* *Sikyi* rhythm, line C-rhythm played on “Ayiko, Ayiko”

Not having enough drums to cover all of the supporting parts of the *Sikyi* dance rhythm, Blakey’s percussionists play composite parts that allude to the original *Sikyi* rhythms. However,

because the low drum does not change its rhythm like the medium *tamalin* does, these composite rhythms are constructed so that they are identical if oriented on the first or third beat of the measure. Therefore in this situation the *Siki* rhythm may be heard as it was originally intended beginning on the ‘and’ of two, or as Blakey’s ensemble eventually orient it, beginning on the ‘and’ of four. Consequently, the opening bars of the song may be interpreted as having the correct *Siki* orientation; however once Abul-Malik enters the rhythm gets shifted two beats. I have represented this change in orientation of the bell pattern by notating a 2/4 bar, (measure 4), right before Lateef’s entrance.

Blakey also seems to sense the unsettledness in the rhythmic groove. He does not play a single note until measure 16, and then tentatively feels his way into the song. He begins by playing his hi-hat sporadically as if trying to find the best place to play. Finally he resolves to play his hi-hat on every beat. This locks the groove into a steady four beat count, and at the same time drowns out the bell pattern; Blakey’s hi-hat articulations are so strong that the bell is only slightly audible. Drowning out the bell pattern might have been Blakey’s intention, because when the bell is heard above the rest of the rhythm section it appears that it has shifted once again to begin its articulation on the ‘and’ of one. Though the bell is at times very difficult to hear, by the second verse of call-and-response it has settled into its new orientation and remains there until the end of the song.

When listening to this recording Gbolonyo had the same assessment that I did. He identified that the song begins with the *Syiki* pattern in a highlife style, and once the tenor saxophone and bass enter the orientation of the pattern changes. Furthermore, the supporting musicians also utilize patterns (the shaker in particular) from *Kpanlogo* and *Boboobo*, synthesizing different dance drum styles together similar to that of highlife. Gbolonyo also

suggests that perhaps they reorient the time line on purpose to create something new. I do not believe this is the case; if the supporting rhythms reference *Sikyi* in such a close manner, it seems more likely that the rhythm was misinterpreted, if only slightly.

It is my opinion that Abul-Malik misinterpreted the bell pattern—which is very easy to do—for two reasons. First, the supporting drums play rhythms that may be interpreted as beginning on beat 1 or beat 3 of the cycle, creating a certain amount of ambiguity in the time cycle. Second, the large amount of silence characteristic of this time line and the fact that there is no articulation on the downbeat makes it particularly difficult to identify the location of the downbeat. This is especially true for musicians who are not intimately familiar with the *Sikyi* dance rhythm and who probably have never seen the dance movements. Agawu cautions that in determining the rhythmic orientation of time lines, as well as other interweaving polyrhythmic rhythms, one must take into consideration the emphasis placed on unsounded portions of the cycle. “If you ignore the role of the unsounded, you may miss the orientation provided by the choreographic rhythm. You might then be led to think that the first sound you hear marks the beginning of the metrical cycle, that relatively longer durations indicate downbeats or that downbeats must be ‘filled’ with sound rather than silence.”⁷³⁴ Agawu states “the idea of knowing where the beat is but articulating it as silence is part of an aesthetic of play found in numerous African communities.”⁷³⁵ In this case of *Sikyi*, the dance choreography and not the time line articulate the downbeat. If Abdul-Malik was not familiar with the dance then it would help to explain why they interpreted the rhythm shifted over two beats beginning on the ‘and’ of four.

⁷³⁴ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 77

⁷³⁵ *Ibid*, 77

15.2.4 “Mystery of Love”

In the early 1960s both Blakey and Weston recorded versions of Guy Warren’s “Mystery of Love.” Blakey’s version was recorded in 1962 and released on the *African Beat* album. Weston’s was recorded in 1963 and released on his *Highlife Jazz* album. Weston has said that Blakey’s use of African music was a big influence on his own, but he could not remember hearing Blakey’s version of “Mystery of Love” before his own.⁷³⁶ Guy Warren’s “Mystery of Love” was originally written for part of a show for the African Room, a club in New York City. It portrays a youth and a maid brought together for the first time by the mysterious forces of love.⁷³⁷

Both Blakey and Weston’s versions feature a polyrhythmic percussion accompaniment and both use a variation of the standard time pattern.⁷³⁸ While Blakey’s version begins with a short stroke followed by two long strokes, Weston orients the pattern so that the three long strokes come first. If we were to split the time line in half, Blakey’s version begins at the starting point of one half while Weston’s begins at the starting point of the other half (see figure 30.) We may also describe the relationship of these two orientations as retrograde to one another. As stated in chapter 13, this orientation of the time line is often used in Yoruba drumming.⁷³⁹ Interestingly, Weston recorded “Mystery of Love” in 1998 on his *Khepera* album and on that recording he reorients the time line to that of Blakey’s.

⁷³⁶ Weston, Interview with Squinobal, 2007

⁷³⁷ Ibid

⁷³⁸ Weston’s version of “Mystery of Love” was also discussed in chapter 13, for further information.

⁷³⁹ Anku, Willy, “Circles and Time: A Theory of Structural Organization of Rhythm in African Music.” *Music Theory Online*. Vol. 6, No. 1 2000.
(<http://www.societymusictheory.org/mto/issues/mto.00.6.1/toc.6.1.html>)

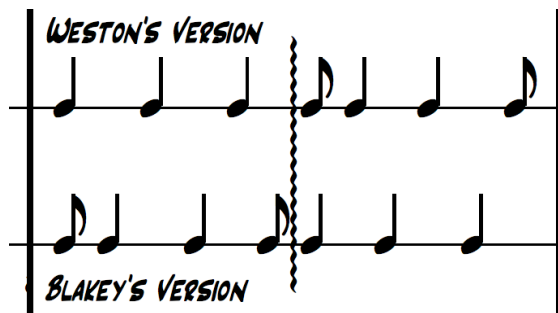


Figure 30: Time line patterns used in Blakey and Weston's versions of "Mystery of Love"

Both Blakey and Weston's versions of "Mystery of Love" begin with a horn introduction. However while Weston's is pre-composed, I suspect that the one performed by Lateef for Blakey is improvised, due to its melodic contour and phrasing. Blakey's version also features a short solo by Lateef on oboe, which is based primarily on the harmonic minor scale. Lateef's solo is followed by an extended drum set solo by Blakey in which he plays off a call-and-response figure from the rhythm section, leaving space for the accompanying instruments to respond. At the same time he gradually increases the complexity and length of his phrases. Gbolonyo identifies that the woodblock on Blakey's version imitates the previously identified *kaganu* pattern. However, when situated like it is against this specific orientation of the standard pattern, it seems is not southern Ghanaian but more likely Yoruba in orientation.⁷⁴⁰ (See Appendix C for a transcription of "Mystery of Love" and Lateef's improvised introduction.)

Blakey's version of "Mystery of Love" also makes effective use of Solomon Ilori's call-and-response with the rest of the percussion ensemble. The chant first heard in measure 18 is an imitation of the hunter or warrior chant often used among the people of southern Ghana.⁷⁴¹ The chant is not performed exactly but the melodic contour of the chant is followed and the words are

⁷⁴⁰ Gbolonyo, interview by Squinobal, 2009

⁷⁴¹ Gbolonyo interview by Squinobal, 2009

very similar. (The original chant is “Oh Say Ei Yea” and the “Mystery of Love” chant goes “Eh Eh Ah Yea.”) The connection between the “Mystery of Love” chant and the southern Ghanaian chant is not a surprise as Guy Warren most likely used the original chant as the basis for his melody. The spoken words performed in between and above the chant are in a dialect of Yoruba.⁷⁴²

The combination of languages from Yoruba and southern Ghanaian traditions together in the same song are significant in a few ways. First, it shows the diversity of the musicians playing on the recording; drawing their influences from many different West African traditions as well as African American and Afro-Caribbean, the synthesis can be seen in both the drum rhythms and language used. Second, it represents a synthesis of West African styles often found in popular music genres like highlife and Afro-Beat. Third, this combination of Yoruba and southern Ghanaian influences represent some of Blakey’s experiences when he went to West Africa, as he divided his time between Lagos and Accra. Finally the use of both Yoruba and southern Ghanaian languages and musical elements also represent experiences of the composer; Warren was born in Accra, but spent time among the Yoruba in Nigeria.⁷⁴³

While Blakey’s version makes effective use of vocal call and response, Weston’s version features the piano. It includes an extended piano solo introduction on top of the rhythm and horn accompaniment (this solo was discussed in Chapter 13.) He performs another extended piano solo after the statement of the melody in which Weston continues to develop the pentatonic material described in chapter 13. Weston was able to present his own version of “Mystery of Love” referencing very little of Blakey’s recording even though the two were released less than a

⁷⁴² Gbolonyo, interview by Squinobal, 2009; Oyebade Dosunmu, interview Squinobal, 2009

⁷⁴³ Gbolonyo, Interview by Squinobal, 2009

year apart. The distinctiveness of the two renditions is achieved by the different instrumental make-ups and the distinct rhythms used in the accompanying instruments. The improvised solo courses in the middle of each rendition also set the two apart, with Blakey's focusing primarily on his drum solo and the percussion section, while Weston's focuses primarily on his piano solo.

15.2.5 Oscalypso

In a second comparison we see that both Blakey and Lateef recorded renditions of Oscar Pettiford's "Oscalypso." Blakey's version named "Oscalypso" was recorded in 1956 and appears as the third part of his *Drum Suite*, while Lateef's version named "Oscarlypso" was recorded in 1964 and appears on his *Live At Pep's Album*.⁷⁴⁴ This time it seems that Lateef draws some of his version from Blakey's, but again the two are able to achieve quite distinct versions of the same song. One of the defining features of this song is the bass ostinato. Both versions of the song open with the bass playing solo. The two renditions of the introduction are similar, however the ostinato played by the composer, Pettiford, of Blakey's version is a bit more rhythmically intricate. On Lateef's version bassist Ernie Farrow plays a simplified adaptation that includes the essential characteristics of the ostinato. (See Appendix B, for a transcription of Lateef's version of "Oscarcalypso" and Appendix C for a transcription of Blakey's version.)

⁷⁴⁴ Blakey, *Drum Suite*, Columbia, 1956; and Lateef, *Live At Peps*, Impulse, 1964.



Figure 31: bass ostinatos used on Blakey's "Oscalypso" and Lateef's "Oscarlypso"

Blakey's version of *Oscalypso* features not only the bass ostinato but also a second ostinato played on the piano. His version includes hand percussionists and a second drum set player that enter one at a time as they do in the majority of his African influenced pieces. The secondary drum set part is restricted to a swing pattern with brushes and high-hat on two and four. However this simple drum part provides tension in the rhythms section, as the swing rhythm pulls slightly against the straighter eighth note of the Afro-Latin rhythms. The multiple ostinatos and the larger percussion section give the piece a more polyrhythmic feel. Blakey enters once the rhythm section settles in and adds a little bit more punch to the ensemble and Curtis Fuller plays a repeated rhythm on the large gong before the melody is stated.

Lateef's version features a shortened intro, no piano ostinato, and no staggered entrances. The horns and drums come in simultaneously and there is no space held open for the development of the rhythm section. In fact, there really is no need for the development of the rhythm section as there is no auxiliary percussion on hand for this recording. The horns play a short four bar introduction after the bass and then Lateef states the A section of the melody. In this version there is slightly more attention given to the melody, as the tenor plays the A sections and the trumpet takes the bridge. Lateef has also added an eight bar interlude that includes a two

measure solo break leading into the solos. Lateef's interpretation is a stripped down version of Blakey's, keeping most of the essential elements, yet doing away with much of the layered polyrhythm.

One cannot argue recording limitations for the shortened development of the introductory material of this song; this was recorded live at Peps and it is not even the longest tune on the recording. Of course the brevity of the composition is partially due to the ensemble size; there is only one drummer and no additional percussionists. The omission of the piano ostinato is suspicious however. Perhaps this tune was recalled from an early hearing of Blakey's version and the piano part was simply forgotten about. On the other hand I'm sure Lateef wanted to put his individualized stamp on the tune. The main focus for Lateef's group is on the choruses of improvised solos between the opening and closing melodies, not in building rhythmic density.

15.3 SUMMARY OF PART III

With this analysis I have shown that Weston, Blakey, and Lateef utilized certain elements of West African music in their own music to symbolize a connection with both West African traditional and popular music. In some cases very general elements were borrowed; all three depend on the use of ostinato, polyrhythm, and West African traditional instruments. Lateef in particular turns non-percussive instruments like the flute and saxophone into percussive instruments, while Weston applies drum techniques to the piano. Blakey employs the frequent use of call-and-response in both a vocal and drumming context in much of his work. These musicians also borrow musical material and techniques from very specific cultural groups and

musical styles. These specific instances include Weston's use of Congolese children's songs, and a pentatonic structure derived from Ewe vocal music; Blakey's use of specific bell patterns and drum rhythms, from previously identified Ewe, Ashanti, and Yoruba dance drumming pieces; and Lateef's concept of tonal production and melodic phrasing drawn from Islamic West Africa.

The community of musicians that Blakey, Weston, and Lateef performed, recorded and shared music with was a diverse group comprised of West African, Afro-Caribbean and African American musicians. Their synthesis of general and specific West African musical materials and techniques reflects the diversity of this community. However, this diversity of musical influences is not restricted to the community of musicians living in New York who interacted with Blakey, Lateef and Weston. This community is but one of many examples of musicians drawing musical influences from West Africa, North America and the Caribbean. In fact, even in communities where all of the musicians are from the same ethnic group a diversity of musical elements is still significantly present. By the 1960s African American, Afro-Caribbean and West African musicians, particularly popular musicians, were listening to and drawing from all kinds of musical influences.

One may argue that many of the dance styles utilized on Art Blakey's *The African Beat* album would have been performed more 'authentically' or more 'accurately' had the percussionists all been Ewe or Yoruba. However that authenticity would not have improved the album. A group of percussionist who are all familiar with one ethnic groups traditional song might have been able to perform the secondary parts to those songs more 'authentically', but the authenticity of secondary parts is not what is important. Blakey was not interested in accurately reproducing traditional drum rhythms; he was interested in producing original music draw from elements of West African traditional and popular music. Like any jazz musician his intent was

not to rehash old material but to create something new and original from the old. All three musicians borrowed ideas from West African music, elements that they were able to identify and perform. The example of Blakey's use of the *Sikyi* rhythm probably drawn from highlife is an obvious example, borrowing easily identifiable elements, in this case the bell pattern, but not necessarily using those elements in a traditional way. In fact, the borrowing of diverse musical elements is how highlife developed in West Africa and how jazz developed in America.

Musical appropriation has artistic risks. The flexibility of borrowing from different cultures allows for creativity because there are no binding rules about how elements must be utilized. Therefore, musicians can use these elements in new creative ways. An example of this flexibility is found when comparing the two distinct versions of "Mystery of love." Both Blakey and Weston's versions contain certain essential elements and at the same time use those elements differently to produce distinct and original renditions. Yet there is also a risk that original elements, once quite unique and individual, begin to become homogenized and the individualities begin to merge into a blurry general collective pool of musical materials. For example, instead of keeping the bell pattern with the three articulated off-beat strikes in "Ayiko, Ayiko," Blakey turns to playing his hi-hat on the 'and' of all four beats drowning out the distinctive qualities and effectiveness of the beat. Another example: in comparing the two version of "Oscalypso," many of the original characteristic found in Blakey's version, including the multiple ostinatos and the layering of percussion, are absent from Lateef's version.

In the end the results of Weston, Lateef, and Blakey's synthesis of West African music and jazz are important to both jazz musicians and the African American community as a whole. The collection of work includes creative songs that synthesize elements of diverse music that references back to a lost cultural heritage and brings that heritage to the attention of their

listeners. While synthesizing West African music with jazz Blakey, Lateef, and Weston were able to add to their musical legacy, forging new styles of jazz while looking back and drawing musical elements from their cultural roots.

16.0 CONCLUSION

The majority of scholarship concerning the influence of African music on jazz has focused primarily on the role African music has played in the origins of jazz or on the retention of African musical elements that have endured through the development of jazz. However in this dissertation I have focused not on the retention of African music in jazz, but on specific instances of intentional borrowing of West African music. Weston, Lateef, and Blakey all fused West African music with jazz as a way to symbolize cultural unity, heighten awareness of the important role West African culture plays in the lives of African Americans, and raise a political voice advocating for independence and civil rights.

By implementing Timothy Rice's theoretical model and focusing on the experiences of individuals I have provided a better understanding of the lives of African American musicians in general. Using Rice's model I have examined the lives of Weston, Blakey, and Lateef in three ways. First, I have examined their experiences through time and identified influences that aided in their development and encouraged their interest in West African music, as they grew older. Second, I have identified places that were significant to each musician and I have demonstrated how these places helped to encourage the use of West African music. Finally I have identify specific elements of West African music that came to represent West African music and culture to each musician. Consequently, this specific study of the lives, influences and music of three

individuals has produced a better understand the life experiences, desires and actions of the African American music community in general.

Through the research and writing of this work certain aspects of African American history have been brought to light. First, the concepts, activities, and products of the Harlem Renaissance movement were not confined to Harlem, New York. This Renaissance movement and its by-products touched the lives of African Americans throughout the United States especially in its urban areas. Influenced by multiple concepts of Pan-Africanism, young African American musicians like Weston, Lateef, and Blakey were encouraged to seek out spiritual, physical, and musical connections with West Africa, the place that they considered their spiritual and historical homeland. Encouraged by the perceived spiritual connection with West Africa, many African Americans found strength in connecting their racial struggles in the United States with the struggles of Africans on the continent and throughout the diaspora.

The 1950s and 60s were a pivotal time in American history and in the history of the Western world in general. In the United States, African Americans fought for improved civil rights. At the same time, the tentacles of European colonialism were finally beginning to loosen from around the third world. The people African descent were finally gaining their independence; Ghana and Nigeria gained their independence in 1957 and 1960 respectively and Caribbean countries including Jamaica and Trinidad gained their independence in 1962. The spiritual connection felt by African Americans to Africans and Afro-Caribbeans during this period is evident in the relationships that were formed between Weston, Blakey, and Lateef and the West African and Afro-Caribbean musicians they collaborated with.

The intercultural activities of African, African American, and Afro-Caribbean musicians during the 1950s and 60s should not be looked upon as a one-way relationship in which the

hegemonic West set precedence and established musical archetypes that African, and Afro-Caribbean musicians sought to emulate. Nor can this relationship be characterized as even a two-way relationship that transported musical influence back and forth from the African continent to the West. Instead this time can best be view as the intersection of many individual webs of culture, with each musician at the center of each web and each web crisscrossing many different webs as relationships were formed.⁷⁴⁵ While African popular musicians drew inspiration from music of the Caribbean and North America, North American and Caribbean musicians drew inspiration from West Africa and each other, creating a multi-dimensional platform of exchange. It may be argued that West African musicians would never be able to play the blues or jazz properly because they lacked the ‘American experience’ needed to create the feeling of these musics, or that African American musicians don’t use West African traditional music properly because they are unfamiliar within its cultural context. However, many of these musical elements are transferable and are borrowed back and forth because they contain the same essential elements and the origin of these essential musical elements is West African traditional music.

The music that Weston, Lateef, and Blakey created capitalized on these essential musical elements. They also utilized music composed by West African composers, and created West African-sounding music that signified a connection with West Africa. Their use of West African musical elements not only provided them with a sense of connection to their cultural heritage; it also brought a great awareness of West African traditional and popular music to the general public. What is most important to glean from this investigation of Weston, Blakey, and Lateef’s

⁷⁴⁵ Gary Tomlinson, “The Web of Culture: A Context for Musicology.” *Nineteenth-Century Music* 76:3 (1984) 50-62,

music is that the West African musical elements utilized and the imagery evoked by those elements functioned as a symbol of West African heritage. The accuracy of the implementation of those elements is less important than their function as a symbol of freedom, equality, pride, heritage, independence, and respect—all of the things African Americans were fighting for in the 1960s.

The fact that each musician plays a very different instrument and has been influenced by West African music in many distinct ways highlights the pervasiveness of West African influence on jazz and on African American musicians in the 1960s. As a multi wind instrumentalist and a fervent Muslim, Lateef used his strong interest in Islamic music and culture to investigate West African Islamic music. He performed on instruments that he felt were similar to those found in West Africa or in some cases on actual West African instruments like the alghaita. When playing the saxophone or the flute Lateef placed the highest priority on tonal production and timbral manipulation and he equated timbral manipulation on these instruments to the varied timbres of West African instruments. Blakey capitalized on the popularity of Ewe drum ensembles by adding a plethora of drummers and percussionists to his ensembles. He focused on using dance drum time lines, very specific supporting drum patterns and master drum praise text phrases. Weston drew upon his perception of Pan-African concepts to show the similarities in music from throughout the diaspora. He also took advantage of trips to Nigeria to interact with West African popular musicians. Weston focused on using West African melody and rhythm on the piano and attempted to develop the West African talking drum technique on the piano.

At the time it was not always easy, for Blakey, Lateef, and Weston to incorporate West African elements into their work. Weston discusses some of the struggles he has had to endure,

he states, “Africa was a place to be ashamed of. [Africa was misrepresented] in the Hollywood movies, and in the educational system,” so playing an integrated music of jazz and West African music left Weston in a lonely position for many years. “People considered Europe to be the highpoint of civilization.” His choice to integrate the two musics placed him in an “unpopular position at times,” states Weston, “but you have to do what you have to do.”⁷⁴⁶ Although it has been a very long process for all three musicians, they recognize that it is important to understand African history and heritage as it relates to American history and heritage. This understanding is the first step to improving the lives of African Americans.

Understanding the lives and music of Blakey, Weston and Lateef is equally important because it provides a greater awareness of the importance of African heritage to all Americans. Recognition of the existence of an African history and the vital part it has played and continues to play in the shaping of American culture is the next step to true equality in America. Understanding West African musical material in jazz is essential to understanding the important role Africa has played in the formation of American culture in general. African traditional cultural traits have played a primary role in the ongoing efforts of African Americans to rediscover a culture that was all but taken away during the time of slavery. Recognizing their African roots has also provided African Americans with an avenue by which to travel in their pursuit of equality in a society that has relegated them to second-class citizenship. The importance of recognizing and celebrating African history as an important aspect of African American, and ultimately all American social structure, cannot be underestimated. Without acknowledging and appreciating African history and culture as integral to the shaping of America, African Americans will continue to dwell as second-class citizens; an afterthought in

⁷⁴⁶ Weston, personal interview with Jason Squinobal, 03/26/2007

the Anglo-dominated development of America. Despite efforts on many fronts to alleviate the problem of inequality, it will exist until African culture is given the recognition it is due in the shaping of America.

APPENDIX A

17.0 WESTON MUSICAL TRANSCRIPTIONS

Mystery of Love

Randy Weston's Improvised Introduction

Transcribed by Jason Squinobal

Piano

First system of piano introduction notation. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 6/4. The system consists of two measures. The first measure has a treble clef with a quarter rest, followed by an eighth rest, then a triplet of eighth notes (F#, G#, A), another triplet of eighth notes (B, C, D), and a quarter rest. The bass clef has a whole rest. The second measure has a treble clef with a whole rest, followed by an eighth rest, then a triplet of eighth notes (E, F#, G). The bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes (F#, G, A) followed by a quarter rest.

Piano

Second system of piano introduction notation. The treble clef has a triplet of eighth notes (A, B, C), followed by a triplet of eighth notes (D, E, F#), a triplet of eighth notes (G, A, B), a triplet of eighth notes (C, D, E), a triplet of eighth notes (F#, G, A), a triplet of eighth notes (B, C, D), and a quintuplet of eighth notes (E, F#, G, A, B) ending with a quarter rest. The bass clef has a whole rest, followed by a quarter rest, and then a triplet of eighth notes (C, D, E) ending with a quarter rest.

Piano

Third system of piano introduction notation. The first measure has a treble clef with a whole rest, followed by an eighth rest, then a quarter note (F#). The bass clef has a quarter note (F#), an eighth note (G), an eighth note (A), and a quarter rest. The second measure has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes (B, C, D), an eighth rest, then a triplet of eighth notes (E, F#, G), followed by another triplet of eighth notes (A, B, C) and a final triplet of eighth notes (D, E, F#). The bass clef has a whole rest.

Piano

Fourth system of piano introduction notation. The first measure has a treble clef with a quarter note (F#), an eighth note (G), an eighth note (A), a quarter rest, an eighth rest, and a quarter note (B). The bass clef has a whole rest, followed by a quarter rest, then a triplet of eighth notes (C, D, E) and a quarter rest. The second measure has a treble clef with a whole rest. The bass clef has a quarter note (F#), an eighth note (G), an eighth note (A), and a quarter rest.

8

Piano

10

Piano

11

Piano

12

Piano

14

Piano

Uhuru Kwanza

♩. = 130

Transcribed by Jason Squinobal

Maracas

Jawbone

Bongo Drums

Conga Drums

7

Mrcs.

Jaw.

7

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

13

D. S.

13

Mrcs.

Jaw.

13

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

Uhuru Kwanza

19

D. S.

Mrs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

This system contains measures 19 through 24. The D. S. part features a repeating eighth-note melody. The Mrs. part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The Jaw. part provides a rhythmic foundation with eighth notes. The Bgo. Dr. part has a more complex eighth-note pattern, while the C. Dr. part plays a simpler eighth-note accompaniment.

25

D. S.

Mrs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

This system contains measures 25 through 30. The musical parts continue with the same patterns established in the previous system, maintaining the rhythmic and melodic structure of the piece.

31

D. S.

Mrs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

This system contains measures 31 through 36. The musical parts continue with the same patterns established in the previous systems, maintaining the rhythmic and melodic structure of the piece.

Uhuru Kwanza

37

D. S.

Mrs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

This musical system covers measures 37 through 42. It features five staves: D. S. (Drum Solo), Mrs. (Mrs. Kwanza), Jaw. (Jawara), Bgo. Dr. (Bongo Drum), and C. Dr. (Conga Drum). The D. S. staff uses a treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 7/8 time signature. The Mrs. staff uses a soprano clef with a key signature of one flat. The Jaw. staff uses a bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The Bgo. Dr. staff uses a treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The C. Dr. staff uses a bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The music is written in a rhythmic style with many rests and specific note values.

43

D. S.

Mrs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

This musical system covers measures 43 through 48. It features the same five staves as the previous system: D. S. (Drum Solo), Mrs. (Mrs. Kwanza), Jaw. (Jawara), Bgo. Dr. (Bongo Drum), and C. Dr. (Conga Drum). The notation continues with the same rhythmic patterns and key signature of one flat.

Uhuru Kwanza

49 A

Pno.

A.B.

D. S.

Mrs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

55

Pno.

A.B.

D. S.

Mrs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

Uhuru Kwanza

61

Pno.

A.B.

D. S.

Mrs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

This system contains measures 61 through 66. The piano part (Pno.) has a treble staff with whole rests and a bass staff with a descending eighth-note line. The A.B. part has a bass staff with a descending eighth-note line. The D. S. part has a single staff with eighth notes and rests. The Mrs. part has a single staff with quarter notes. The Jaw. part has a single staff with eighth notes. The Bgo. Dr. part has a single staff with eighth notes. The C. Dr. part has a single staff with eighth notes.

67

Pno.

A.B.

D. S.

Mrs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

This system contains measures 67 through 72. The piano part (Pno.) has a treble staff with whole rests and a bass staff with a descending eighth-note line. The A.B. part has a bass staff with a descending eighth-note line. The D. S. part has a single staff with eighth notes and rests. The Mrs. part has a single staff with quarter notes. The Jaw. part has a single staff with eighth notes. The Bgo. Dr. part has a single staff with eighth notes. The C. Dr. part has a single staff with eighth notes.

Uhuru Kwanza

73

T. Sax. 2

Pno.

73

A.B.

73

D. S.

73

Mrs.

Jaw.

73

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

The musical score for 'Uhuru Kwanza' begins at measure 73. The instrumentation includes T. Sax. 2, Pno., A.B., D. S., Mrs., Jaw., Bgo. Dr., and C. Dr. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The saxophone and piano parts play a melodic line consisting of eighth and quarter notes, primarily using F# and G. The drums provide a steady rhythmic accompaniment with various patterns across the different parts.

Uhuru Kwanza

79

T. Sx. 2

Pno.

79

A.B.

79

D. S.

79

Mrs.

Jaw.

79

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

Uhuru Kwanza

85

T. Sx. 2

Tbn.

Pno.

85

A.B.

85

D. S.

85

Mrs.

Jaw.

85

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

The musical score for 'Uhuru Kwanza' begins at measure 85. The instrumentation includes T. Sx. 2, Tbn., Pno., A.B., D. S., Mrs., Jaw., Bgo. Dr., and C. Dr. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 4/4. The piano part features a treble staff with a sustained chord and a bass staff with a walking bass line. The other instruments play various rhythmic and melodic patterns.

Uhuru Kwanza

91

T. Sx. 2

Tbn.

Pno.

A.B.

91

D. S.

91

Mrs.

Jaw.

91

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

Uhuru Kwanza

97

Pno.

97

A.B.

97

D. S.

97

Mrs.

Jaw.

97

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

The musical score for 'Uhuru Kwanza' starting at measure 97. The score is written for a multi-instrument ensemble. The parts are: Piano (Pno.), A.B. (likely Alto Saxophone), D. S. (likely Drums), Mrs. (likely Maracas), Jaw. (likely Jaw's), Bgo. Dr. (likely Bongos/Drums), and C. Dr. (likely Congas/Drums). The piano part has a treble and bass staff. The A.B. part is a single staff. The D. S. part is a single staff with a key signature of one sharp. The Mrs. part is a single staff with a key signature of one sharp. The Jaw. part is a single staff with a key signature of one sharp. The Bgo. Dr. part is a single staff with a key signature of one sharp. The C. Dr. part is a single staff with a key signature of one sharp. The score shows six measures of music for each part, starting at measure 97.

Uhuru Kwanza

103

B1

Mrb.

Pno.

A.B.

D. S.

Mrcs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

Uhuru Kwanza

109

Mrb.

Pno.

A.B.

D. S.

Mrs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

The musical score for 'Uhuru Kwanza' begins at measure 109. The Mrb. and Pno. parts feature a melodic line in the right hand with triplets. The A.B. part has a melodic line in the bass. The D. S. part is a rhythmic pattern. The Mrs. part has a steady quarter-note pulse. The Jaw. part has a steady eighth-note pulse. The Bgo. Dr. and C. Dr. parts have a steady eighth-note pulse.

Uhuru Kwanza

C1

113

Fl.

T. Sx. 2

115

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

Mrb.

Pno.

A.B.

115

D. S.

Mrcs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

sfz

sfz

8^{vb}

8^{vb}

3

3

Uhuru Kwanza

121

Fl.

T. Sx. 2

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

Mrb.

Pno.

A.B.

D. S.

Mrcs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

sfz

sfz

sfz

8vb

8vb

3

3

Uhuru Kwanza

127

Fl.

T. Sx. 2

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

Mrb.

Pno.

A.B.

D. S.

Mrcs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

sfz

sfz

sfz

8^{vb}

8^{vb}

8^{vb}

8^{vb}

The musical score for 'Uhuru Kwanza' spans measures 127 to 132. It features a variety of instruments and vocal parts. The Flute (Fl.) and Tenor Saxophone 2 (T. Sx. 2) play a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes. The Baritone Trumpet (B♭ Tpt.) and Trombone (Tbn.) provide harmonic support with chords and single notes. The Mallets (Mrb.) and Piano (Pno.) play a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The African Bells (A.B.) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Drums (D. S., Mrcs., Jaw., Bgo. Dr., C. Dr.) provide a complex rhythmic foundation. The score includes dynamic markings such as *sfz* (sforzando) and *8^{vb}* (octave below). The key signature is one flat (Bb), and the time signature is 4/4.

Uhuru Kwanza

133 B2

Fl.

T. Sx. 2

B^b Tpt.

Tbn.

Mrb.

Pno.

A.B.

D. S.

Mrcs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

8^{va}

sfz

3 3 3 3

Uhuru Kwanza

138

Fl.

T. Sx. 2

8^{va}

139

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

8^{va}

sfz

sfz

Mrb.

Pno.

A.B.

D. S.

Mrcs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

Uhuru Kwanza

143 C2

Fl.

T. Sx. 2

145

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

145

Mrb.

145

Pno.

145

A.B.

145

D. S.

145

Mrcs.

Jaw.

145

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

The musical score is arranged in a multi-staff format. The top staff is for Flute (Fl.), starting at measure 143 with a 'C2' annotation. The second staff is for Tenor Saxophone 2 (T. Sx. 2). The third and fourth staves are for B♭ Trumpet (B♭ Tpt.) and Trombone (Tbn.), both starting at measure 145 and showing rests. The fifth staff is for Maracas (Mrb.), starting at measure 145. The sixth staff is for Piano (Pno.), starting at measure 145. The seventh staff is for Accordion (A.B.), starting at measure 145. The eighth staff is for Conga (C. Dr.), starting at measure 145. The ninth staff is for Bongos (Bgo. Dr.), starting at measure 145. The tenth staff is for Jaw (Jaw.), starting at measure 145. The eleventh staff is for Maracas (Mrcs.), starting at measure 145. The twelfth staff is for Drums (D. S.), starting at measure 145. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and triplets.

Uhuru Kwanza

150

Fl.

T. Sx. 2

151

B \flat Tpt.

Tbn.

151

Mrb.

151

Pno.

151

A.B.

151

D. S.

151

Mrs.

Jaw.

151

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

The musical score for 'Uhuru Kwanza' is presented in a multi-staff format. The score begins at measure 150 and continues through measure 151. The instruments and parts are as follows:

- Fl.**: Flute, playing a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes.
- T. Sx. 2**: Trombone 2, playing a harmonic line with chords.
- B \flat Tpt.**: B-flat Trumpet, playing a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes.
- Tbn.**: Tenorbone, playing a harmonic line with chords.
- Mrb.**: Maracas, playing a rhythmic pattern.
- Pno.**: Piano, playing a harmonic line with chords.
- A.B.**: Alto Saxophone, playing a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes.
- D. S.**: Double Bass, playing a rhythmic pattern.
- Mrs.**: Mridangam, playing a rhythmic pattern.
- Jaw.**: Jawahar, playing a rhythmic pattern.
- Bgo. Dr.**: Bongo, Conga, Tom-tom, playing a rhythmic pattern.
- C. Dr.**: Conga, Tom-tom, playing a rhythmic pattern.

Uhuru Kwanza

157

Fl.

T. Sx. 2

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

Mrb.

Pno.

A.B.

D. S.

Mrcs.

Jaw.

Bgo. Dr.

C. Dr.

The musical score for 'Uhuru Kwanza' is presented on a single page, starting at measure 157. The score is arranged in a multi-staff format. The instruments and voices included are: Flute (Fl.), Trombone (T. Sx. 2), B♭ Trumpet (B♭ Tpt.), Trombone (Tbn.), Maracas (Mrb.), Piano (Pno.), Alto Saxophone (A.B.), Drums (D. S.), Maracas (Mrcs.), Jaw (Jaw.), Bongos (Bgo. Dr.), and Congas (C. Dr.). The score is written in 7/8 time. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The melody is primarily carried by the Flute, with supporting parts from the Trombone, Maracas, and Piano. The percussion section, including the Bongos and Congas, provides a rhythmic foundation. The Alto Saxophone and Maracas have specific melodic lines. The Drums and Maracas have a more complex, syncopated pattern. The Jaw and Maracas have a steady, rhythmic pattern. The B♭ Trumpet and Trombone have a steady, rhythmic pattern. The Maracas have a steady, rhythmic pattern. The Piano has a steady, rhythmic pattern. The Alto Saxophone has a steady, rhythmic pattern. The Drums have a steady, rhythmic pattern. The Maracas have a steady, rhythmic pattern. The Jaw has a steady, rhythmic pattern. The Bongos have a steady, rhythmic pattern. The Congas have a steady, rhythmic pattern. The score ends with a double bar line.

Caban Bamboo Highlife

Randy Weston

Transcribed By Jason Squinobal

Drum Set

Shaker

Bongo Drums

D. S.

Shr.

B. Dr.

The musical score is written for six percussion instruments: Drum Set, Shaker, Bongo Drums, D. S. (Double Snare), Shr. (Shaver), and B. Dr. (Bongos). The score is in 4/4 time, indicated by the 'C' time signature. The Drum Set part features a steady eighth-note pattern with accents on the off-beats. The Shaker part consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern with accents. The Bongo Drums part features a steady eighth-note pattern with accents. The D. S. part features a steady eighth-note pattern with accents. The Shr. part consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern with accents. The B. Dr. part features a steady eighth-note pattern with accents. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system ending at measure 4 and the second system starting at measure 5. The first system is marked with a '5' above the first measure, and the second system is marked with a '5' above the first measure.

Caban Bamboo Highlife

9

D. S.

Shr.

B. Dr.

9

13

D. S.

Shr.

B. Dr.

13

Caban Bamboo Highlife

A 1

17

S. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bb Tpt.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

D. S.

Shr.

B. Dr.

Caban Bamboo Highlife

[illegible]

Caban Bamboo Highlife

25 A2

S. Sx.

T. Sx.

B \flat Tpt.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

D. S.

Shr.

B. Dr.

Caban Bamboo Highlife

29

S. Sx.

T. Sx.

B \flat Tpt.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

D. S.

Shr.

B. Dr.

Caban Bamboo Highlife

33

S. Sax.

T. Sax.

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

D. S.

Shr.

B. Dr.

Caban Bamboo Highlife

[illegible]

Caban Bamboo Highlife

41 A3

S. Sx.

T. Sx.

B \flat Tpt.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

D. S.

Shr.

B. Dr.

Caban Bamboo Highlife

45

S. Sx.

T. Sx.

B \flat Tpt.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

D. S.

Shr.

B. Dr.

This musical score page contains measures 45 through 48 of the piece 'Caban Bamboo Highlife'. The score is arranged for a seven-piece band. The instruments and their parts are as follows:
 - **S. Sx. (Soprano Saxophone):** Measures 45-48, treble clef.
 - **T. Sx. (Tenor Saxophone):** Measures 45-48, bass clef.
 - **B \flat Tpt. (B-flat Trumpet):** Measures 45-48, treble clef.
 - **Tbn. (Trombone):** Measures 45-48, bass clef.
 - **Pno. (Piano):** Measures 45-48, grand staff (treble and bass clefs).
 - **Bass:** Measures 45-48, bass clef.
 - **D. S. (Drum Set):** Measures 45-48, single line with 'x' marks for cymbals.
 - **Shr. (Shamisen):** Measures 45-48, single line with accents (>).
 - **B. Dr. (Bongos):** Measures 45-48, single line.
 The score is divided into four measures. Measure 45 starts with a key signature change to one flat (B-flat). The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 48.

APPENDIX B

18.0 LATEEF MUSICAL TRANSCRIPTIONS

Bass Ostinatos Composed by Yusef Lateef

1. Sister Mamie



2. Ching Miao



3. Slipin' and Slidin'



4. Plumb Blossom



5. The Three Faces of Balal



6. Weaver



7. SNAFU



8. Psychicemotus



TENOR SAXOPHONE

AYIKO, AYIKO

TRANSCRIBED BY JASON SQUINOBAL

TRANPOSED TO TENOR KEY

LATEEF SOLO

♩=120 *A*

B

C *D*

E *F*

G *H*

I

J

SLIPPIN' AND SLIDIN'

TRANSCRIBED BY JASON SQUINOBAL

YUSEF LATEEF SOLO

SECOND TIME-8VA

1.

2.

(LOCAL)

NOTES SOUNDED ON FLUTE

HUMMED NOTES WITH VOICE

3

FLUTTER TONGUE

SHORT LONG

AH

8VA

SISTER MAMIE

♩=120

ALGITA

5

9

13

17

21

25

29

33

37

41

45

50

TENOR SAXOPHONE

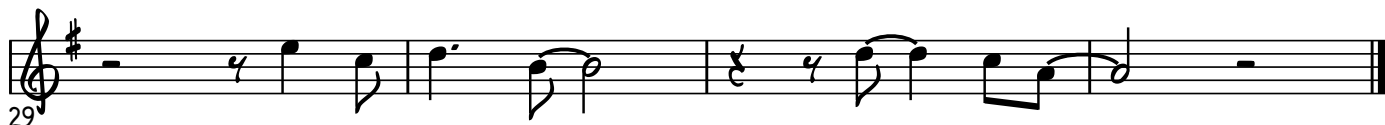
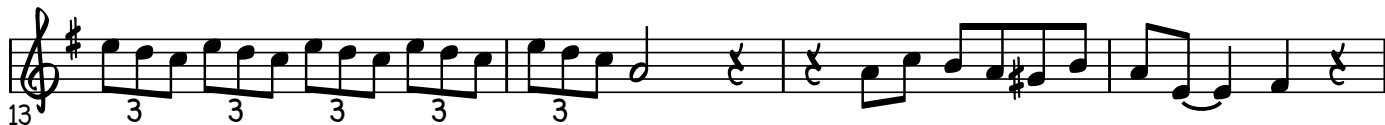
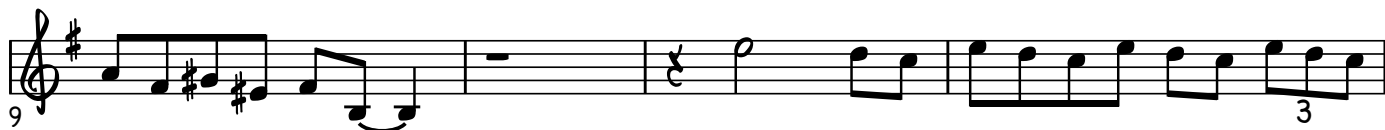
OSCARLYPSO

TRANSCRIBED BY JASON SQUINOBAL

TRANPOSED TO TENOR KEY

LATEEF SOLO

$\text{♩} = 220$



OSCARLYPSO

 $\text{♩} = 220$

UPRIGHT BASS

8

TRUMPET

TENOR SAX

U. BASS

DR.

13

TENOR SAX

(SECOND TIME ONLY) BOTH TIMES

KEYS

U. BASS

DR.

17

TENOR SAX

KEYS

U. BASS

DR.

21

TRUMPET

C7

KEYS

U. BASS

DR.

25

TRUMPET

3

KEYS

U. BASS

DR.

29

TENOR SAX

KEYS

U. BASS

DR.

34

TRUMPET

TENOR SAX

KEYS

U. BASS

DR.

38

TRUMPET

TENOR SAX

KEYS

U. BASS

DR.

42

TRUMPET

TENOR SAX

KEYS

U. BASS

DR.

SOLO BREAK

The musical score consists of five staves. The first staff is for Trumpet, the second for Tenor Sax, the third and fourth for Keys (treble and bass clef), the fifth for U. Bass, and the sixth for Drums. Measure 42 shows the Trumpet and Tenor Sax playing a melodic line, while the Keys and U. Bass provide harmonic support. Measure 43 is the start of a 'SOLO BREAK' for the Tenor Sax, featuring a rapid, ascending scale. Measures 44 and 45 show the continuation of the solo and the rest of the band. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

APPENDIX C

19.0 BLAKEY MUSICAL TRANSCRIPTIONS

IFE L'AYO

SOLOMON G. ILORI

TRANSCRIBED BY JASON SQUINOBAL

DRUMS

GONG

12/8

FF

FF

6

♩=120

PENNY WHISTLE

10

PENNY WHISTLE

14

PENNY WHISTLE

FLUTE

A. BASS

17

PENNY WHISTLE

FLUTE

A. BASS

20

PENNY WHISTLE

FLUTE

A. BASS

23

PENNY WHISTLE

FLUTE

A. BASS

BELL

26

PENNY WHISTLE

FLUTE

A. BASS

BELL

29

PENNY WHISTLE

FLUTE

A. BASS

BELL

RATTLE

HIGH DRUM

CONGAS 1

CONGAS 2

32

PENNY WHISTLE

FLUTE

A. BASS

BELL

RATTLE

HIGH DRUM

CONGAS 1

CONGAS 2

35

PENNY WHISTLE

FLUTE

A. BASS

BELL

RATTLE

HIGH DRUM

CONGAS 1

CONGAS 2

41

PENNY WHISTLE

FLUTE

A. BASS

DRUM SET

BELL

RATTLE

HIGH DRUM

CONGAS 1

CONGAS 2

The musical score for measures 41-43 features the following parts:

- Penny Whistle:** Melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including trills.
- Flute:** Melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a trill.
- A. Bass:** Simple eighth-note accompaniment.
- Drum Set:** Complex rhythmic pattern with various drum sounds.
- Bell:** Simple eighth-note accompaniment.
- Rattle:** Simple eighth-note accompaniment.
- High Drum:** Simple eighth-note accompaniment.
- Congas 1:** Complex rhythmic pattern with various drum sounds.
- Congas 2:** Simple eighth-note accompaniment.

44

PENNY WHISTLE

FLUTE

A. BASS

DRUM SET

BELL

RATTLE

HIGH DRUM

CONGAS 1

CONGAS 2

The musical score for measures 44-46 is as follows:

- Penny Whistle:** Measure 44: G4 (half), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 45: F#4 (half), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 46: G4 (half), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).
- Flute:** Measure 44: G4 (half), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 45: F#4 (half), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 46: G4 (half), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).
- A. Bass:** Measure 44: G2 (half), F#2 (half). Measure 45: E2 (half), D2 (half). Measure 46: C2 (half), B1 (half).
- Drum Set:** Measure 44: Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter). Measure 45: Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter). Measure 46: Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter), Snare (quarter).
- Bell:** Measure 44: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 45: F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 46: E4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4-F#4 (beamed eighth notes).
- Rattle:** Measure 44: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 45: F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 46: E4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4-F#4 (beamed eighth notes).
- High Drum:** Measure 44: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 45: F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 46: E4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4-F#4 (beamed eighth notes).
- Congas 1:** Measure 44: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 45: F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 46: E4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4-F#4 (beamed eighth notes).
- Congas 2:** Measure 44: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 45: F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes). Measure 46: E4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4-F#4 (beamed eighth notes).

TOBI ILU

♩ = 92

MBIRA

4

7

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

MBIRA

10

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

12

DRUM SET

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

14

DRUM SET

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

16

DRUM SET

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

18

DRUM SET

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

20

DRUM SET

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

22

DRUM SET

GUIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

23

DRUM SET

GIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

24

DRUM SET

GIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

25

DRUM SET

GIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

27

DRUM SET

QUIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

29

DRUM SET

QUIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

31

DRUM SET

QUIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

33

DRUM SET

GUIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

35

DRUM SET

GUIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

37

DRUM SET

GUIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

39

DRUM SET

QUIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

41

DRUM SET

QUIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

43

DRUM SET

QUIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

45

DRUM SET

GUIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

47

DRUM SET

GUIRO

HIGH DRUM WITH STICKS

LOW DRUM WITH STICKS

Ayiko Ayiko

Bell

Shaker

High Drum

Congas 1

Congas 2

Low Drum



4

Ten. Sax.

Bell

Shr

H. D.

Cga 1

Cga 2

L. D.

7

Ten. Sax.

A. Bass

Bell

Shr

H. D.

Cga 1

Cga 2

L. D.

The musical score is written for a jazz ensemble. It consists of seven staves, each representing a different instrument or percussion part. The top staff is for Tenor Saxophone (Ten. Sax.), followed by Alto Bass (A. Bass), Bell, Snare Drum (Shr), Hi Drum (H. D.), Conga 1 (Cga 1), Conga 2 (Cga 2), and Low Drum (L. D.). The score is divided into three measures. In the first measure, the Tenor Saxophone and Alto Bass play a melodic line, while the percussion section provides a steady rhythm. In the second measure, the melodic line continues. In the third measure, the Conga 2 and Low Drum parts feature a triplet pattern, indicated by the number '3' above the notes.

384

13 — Ya Ya Ayi-ko A - yi-ko A - yi-ko

Call

Response

A. Bass

Bell

Shr

H. D.

Cga 1

Cga 2

L. D.

16 Ma-lam Djo-le Ayi-ko A -

Call

Response

A. Bass

Drum Set

Bell

Shr

H. D.

Cga 1

Cga 2

L. D.

Ya Ya Ayi-ko Ma-lam Djo-Le Ayi - ko

19 yi - ko Ya — Yea Ma-lam Djo-le Ayi-ko

Call

Response

A. Bass

Drum Set

Bell

Shr

H. D.

Cga 1

Cga 2

L. D.

388

25

Call

Response

A. Bass

Drum Set

Bell

Shr

H. D.

Cga 1

Cga 2

L. D.

Ya Ya Ayi-ko Ma-lam Djo-Le Ayi-ko

A - yi-ko Ya— Yea

The musical score is written for a call-and-response piece. It consists of nine staves. The first staff is for the 'Call' part, which begins with a rest followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The second staff is for the 'Response' part, which begins with a rest followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The third staff is for the 'A. Bass' part, which begins with a rest followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The fourth staff is for the 'Drum Set', which begins with a rest followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The fifth staff is for the 'Bell', which begins with a rest followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The sixth staff is for the 'Shr', which begins with a rest followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The seventh staff is for the 'H. D.', which begins with a rest followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The eighth staff is for the 'Cga 1', which begins with a rest followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The ninth staff is for the 'Cga 2', which begins with a rest followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The tenth staff is for the 'L. D.', which begins with a rest followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are 'Ya Ya Ayi-ko Ma-lam Djo-Le Ayi-ko' and 'A - yi-ko Ya— Yea'. The music is in 4/4 time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including triplets and syncopation.

To Tenor Solo

Call

Response

A. Bass

Drum Set

Bell

Shr

H. D.

Cga 1

Cga 2

L. D.

Ya Ya Ayi-ko Ma-lamDjo-LeAyi-ko

LOVE, THE MYSTERY OF

SLOW RUBATO

OBOE

7

O.B.

6

♩ = 90

12/8

WOOD BLOCK

♩ = 90

8

10

WOOD BLOCK

CONGA 1

12

RATTLE

WOOD BLOCK

HIGH DRUM

CONGA 1

CONGA 2

14

OB.

A. BASS

DRUM SET

RATTLE

WOOD BLOCK

HIGH DRUM

CONGA 1

CONGA 2

16

OB.

A. BASS

DRUM SET

RATTLE

WOOD BLOCK

HIGH DRUM

CONGA 1

CONGA 2

18

A. BASS

DRUM SET

RATTLE

WOOD BLOCK

HIGH DRUM

CONGA 1

CONGA 2



20

CHANT

A. BASS

DRUM SET

RATTLE

WOOD BLOCK

HIGH DRUM

CONGA 1

CONGA 2

EH AH YEAH

22

CHANT

A. BASS

DRUM SET

RATTLE

WOOD BLOCK

HIGH DRUM

CONGA 1

CONGA 2

EH EH AH YEAH

The musical score consists of seven staves. The first two staves are for vocalists: CHANT and A. BASS. The remaining five staves are for percussion: DRUM SET, RATTLE, WOOD BLOCK, HIGH DRUM, and CONGA 1, and CONGA 2. The score is for measures 22 and 23. The vocal parts are in bass clef, and the instrumental parts are in treble clef. The vocal parts have lyrics 'EH EH AH YEAH' under the first measure. The instrumental parts show various rhythmic patterns including eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests.

24

BAR. SOLO

CHANT

OB.

A. BASS

DRUM SET

RATTLE

WOOD BLOCK

HIGH DRUM

CONGA 1

CONGA 2

The musical score is organized into three measures. The first two measures (24 and 25) contain musical notation for the first seven parts: Bar. Solo, Chant, Ob., A. Bass, Drum Set, Rattle, and Wood Block. The Chant part features a melodic line with a slur over the first four notes and a fermata over the last note. The other parts have rests. The third measure (26) shows rests for all parts.

396

OSCALYPSO

♩=200

UPRIGHT BASS

PIANO

U. BASS

PIANO

U. BASS

PIANO

U. BASS

CONGAS

PIANO

U. BASS

CONGAS

24

PIANO

U. BASS

DRUM SET WITH BRUSHES

CONGAS

28

PIANO

U. BASS

DRUM SET WITH BRUSHES

CONGAS

32

PIANO

U. BASS

DRUM SET
BLAKEY

DRUM SET
WITH BRUSHES

CONGAS



36

PIANO

U. BASS

DRUM SET
BLAKEY

DRUM SET
WITH BRUSHES

CONGAS

40

PIANO

U. BASS

DRUM SET
BLAKEY

DRUM SET
WITH BRUSHES

GONG

CONGAS

Measures 40-43 of a musical score. The score includes staves for Piano, U. Bass, Drum Set Blakey, Drum Set with Brushes, Gong, and Congas. The Piano part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The U. Bass part provides a harmonic foundation with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Drum Set Blakey part has a pattern of eighth notes and rests. The Drum Set with Brushes part has a pattern of eighth notes and rests. The Gong part has a single note at the end of each measure. The Congas part has a pattern of eighth notes and rests.



44

PIANO

U. BASS

DRUM SET
BLAKEY

DRUM SET
WITH BRUSHES

GONG

CONGAS

Measures 44-47 of a musical score. The score includes staves for Piano, U. Bass, Drum Set Blakey, Drum Set with Brushes, Gong, and Congas. The Piano part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The U. Bass part provides a harmonic foundation with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Drum Set Blakey part has a pattern of eighth notes and rests. The Drum Set with Brushes part has a pattern of eighth notes and rests. The Gong part has a single note at the end of each measure. The Congas part has a pattern of eighth notes and rests.

48

GUITAR

PIANO

U. BASS

DRUM SET
BLAKEY

DRUM SET
WITH BRUSHES

GONG

CONGAS

52

GUITAR

PIANO

U. BASS

DRUM SET
BLAKEY

DRUM SET
WITH BRUSHES

GONG

CONGAS

55

GUITAR

PIANO

U. BASS

DRUM SET
BLAKEY

DRUM SET
WITH BRUSHES

GONG

CONGAS

The musical score consists of seven staves. The Guitar staff (treble clef) plays a quarter-note melody in measure 55 and a whole-note chord in measure 56. The Piano staff (grand staff) plays a whole-note chord in measure 55 and a whole-note chord in measure 56. The U. Bass staff (bass clef) plays a half-note melody in measure 55 and a half-note melody in measure 56. The Drum Set (Blakey) staff uses a double bar line and 'x' marks to indicate specific drum hits. The Drum Set with Brushes staff uses a double bar line and 'x' marks to indicate specific brush hits. The Gong staff uses a double bar line and a 'v' mark to indicate a gong hit. The Congas staff uses a double bar line and 'x' marks to indicate specific conga hits.

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