At the Vanguard of Vinyl: A Cultural History of the Long-Playing Record in Jazz

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Music in The Graduate School of Duke University

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

At the Vanguard of Vinyl investigates the jazz industry’s adoption of the long-playing record (LP), 1948–1960. The technological advancements of the LP, along with the incipient use of magnetic tape recording, made it feasible to commercially issue recordings running beyond the three-minute restrictions of the 78-rpm record. LPs began to feature extended improvisations, musical mistakes, musicians’ voices, and other moments of informal music making, revolutionizing the standard recording and production methods of the previous recording era. As the visual and sonic modes of representation shifted, so too did jazz’s relationship to white mainstream culture, Western European musical aesthetics, US political structures, and streams of Afro-modernism. Jazz, as an African American social and musical practice, became a form of resistance against the violent structures of institutional racism within the United States in the 1950s.

Using the records of Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, and Cannonball Adderley, this study outlines the diverse approaches to record making that characterized the transitional years as the LP became the standard recording format. Through archival research, close listening, and detailed discographical analyses of the era’s most influential record labels, I show how jazz practices and musical “mistakes” caught on record provided opportunities for recording experimentation. I examine choices made during the record production process, such as tape edits, microphone placement, overdubbing, and other sound processing effects, connecting such choices to the visual and tactile attributes of these discs. Drawing on scholarship that considers how sound reproduction technologies mediate constructions of race and ethnicity, I argue that the history of jazz in the 1950s is one of social engagement by means of and through technology. At the Vanguard of Vinyl is a cultural history of the jazz LP that underscores the ways in which record making is a vital process to music and its circulation.
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There’s an old southern saying that goes something like this: “If you see a turtle sitting on top of a poll, you know it didn’t get there alone.” I first heard this proverb on the bandstand, when bassist John Brown (J.B.) would use it to begin introducing the members of his band, myself included. I adopt it here to open my series of thank yous because it serves as a reminder that my love of this music began and continues to be sustained by my activities as a working jazz musician. So I lead off by thanking Steve Christopher, “Mr. C,” my high school band director who generously gave me his entire LP collection when I first began collecting vinyl. This gift has only increased in its value to me. Here I also must mention Tom Myer and John Davis, two of the more important people to my development as a listener and performer during my years at the University of Colorado. I’d also like to acknowledge J.B. for the many opportunities to play and perform over the years—the passion and dedication of the musicians in his band, including Brian Miller, have kept me grounded in the day-to-day activities and lives of working musicians. “So what are we going to listen to?” was a common and always welcomed question.

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Introduction

The LP Goes Live

This study began as a discography of the so-called live jazz record. Moments of performance captured on record hold enormous weight for jazz listeners. I was interested in the sounds that made such records feel live and the role record production played in the development of the live record genre. I started by making a list of iconic live records. Many came easily to mind: Dave Brubeck Jazz at Oberlin (1953), Art Blakey A Night at Birdland (1954), Ella Fitzgerald Ella in Berlin (1960), Bill Evans Sunday at the Village Vanguard (1961), John Coltrane “Live!” at the Village Vanguard (1962), Keith Jarrett The Köln Concert (1975), Weather Report 8:30 (1979), and many others. The history of these records was straightforward: they were all commercial records, made at an easily identified time and place, and issued soon after their recording dates. Other records were similarly easy to categorize. Benny Goodman The Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert (1950), Thelonious Monk Quartet with John Coltrane at Carnegie Hall (2005), and Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker Town Hall, New York City, June 22, 1945 (2005), were all rediscovered recordings that became commercial releases years (or in some cases decades)
after their original recording dates. Commercial records made from radio broadcasts and bootlegged concerts were another significant category, especially with the boom of CD reissues in the late-1990s.

As my discography grew, my categories became increasingly murky. *John Coltrane at Birdland* (1964) contained half live and half studio tracks. Parker and Gillespie’s *Quintet at Massey Hall* (1953) included bass lines overdubbed by Charles Mingus in the studio at a later time. Capitol Records recorded Cannonball Adderley’s *Mercy, Mercy, Mercy* live, but in a Hollywood studio in front of an invited audience and not in a Chicago nightclub as the liner notes claimed. Other recordings were completely manufactured, recordings made to sound live through studio manipulation. I also realized that many labels treated studios as locations of live record making, so I expanded my search to include recordings with studio chatter and social interactions among musicians, in-studio audiences, and lengthy jam sessions meant to recreate the informal atmosphere of an after-hours club.

Other records existed in multiple different forms. *Ellington at Newport,* initially issued in 1956 by Columbia as a mono LP, reappeared in 1963 in pseudo, or “electronically re-channeled” stereo. Many years later, the label, now Sony-Columbia, issued the record twice on CD, once in 1987 and again in 1999 as a special edition, two-disc set with previously unreleased material. Released with much fanfare, the 1999 CD removed the overdubbed audience noise found on the other versions. I soon began to find other

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1 After the introduction of stereo equipment at the end of the 1950s, record labels began to reissue their mono recordings in what was then called simulated stereo. To create these discs, an audio engineer would split the original mono signal in two, running each signal through delay lines and other filters that desynchronize the two channels. The goal was to simulate the spatialization of stereo. For more, see: “Pseudo Stereo,” *Time,* 20 January 1961, 54.
records with complex release histories. The presence of so many different kinds of records made it increasingly difficult to answer my most basic research question: What is a live recording? My lack of direction and wealth of misinformation made me realize that I needed to rethink my perspective and change my focus. I needed to research different kinds of mediation and their histories. I needed to account for records not only by the dates of their creation but also by the dates of their circulation. I needed to understand why this idea of “live” had become so naturalized to my way of understanding jazz history and why the actual history confounded me to such a degree. What I needed was the long-playing record.

The live recording as a profitable commercial genre resulted directly from the advent of the LP in the 1950s. Of course, there were some precedents and early adopters. Record label owner Norman Granz, for example, issued live jazz recordings on 78-rpm albums in the mid-1940s. Before the LP era, private collectors exchanged live bootlegs made during performances in concert halls and jazz clubs across the country. For troops fighting abroad during World War II, the US Government distributed two forms of long-playing records that were strictly non-commercial. “Victory Discs,” commonly called V-discs, were 12-inch vinyl records that spun at 78-rpm and lasted six to seven minutes per

2 Granz released many two to three disc album sets of his now-famous Jazz at the Philharmonic (JATP) concert series. For more on JATP, see: Tad Hershorn, Norman Granz: The Man Who Used Jazz for Justice (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 81–84.
3 An example of such private tapes can be found on Mosaic Records’s impressive CD set, The Complete Dean Benedetti Recordings of Charlie Parker (1990).
At the same time, the major radio networks produced 16-inch “transcription” discs of their programming that were shipped to soldiers fighting on the front lines. Spinning at 33 1/3-rpm, these discs held between fifteen and sixteen minutes of material. With the exception of Granz’s discs, however, these records were neither mass-produced nor made for public circulation.

For my purposes, I defined live records as recordings of a musical ensemble in a particular space and time, intentionally made for commercial release. These records first appeared in the early-to-mid fifties. For instance, Columbia released Goodman’s *The Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert* in 1950. In 1953, Debut put out *Quintet at Massey Hall* and Fantasy issued Dave Brubeck’s first live recording, *Jazz at Oberlin*. Blue Note issued their first live discs in 1954, beginning with Blakey’s *A Night at Birdland*. A few years later, in 1956, Riverside Records produced their first live record, Randy Weston’s *Jazz à la Bohemia*. By the early-1960s, the live jazz record had become a well-established genre.

As my listening pushed into the early-1950s, I began to realize that the commercial genre of the live jazz record was only half the story. This story I wanted to tell was not simply a history of live moments, but a history of the relationship between performance and recording, stage and studio, record producer and musician. To tell a history only of live records did not account for the ways that record labels and musicians experimented

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5 The practice had been around for several decades though this moment in world history is often cited as a precursor to the LP. Alexander Russo, *Points on the Dial: Golden Age Radio Beyond the Networks* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 77–80. Though both V-discs and transcription records were non-commercial, they became sought after items for collectors beginning in the 1940s.
with the studio as a place of music making. Refocusing my perspective gave me access to a much larger and more significant story about jazz as a musical and social practice. A history of the jazz LP revealed stories of struggle and resistance against forms of institutional racism, stories of Cold War international politics, and stories of Afro-modernities and high modernist aesthetics. It revealed how the expanding capabilities of technological mediation and the increasing role of expert technicians in the studio were changing what “music time” meant from multiple perspectives. Above all, it revealed a history of the jazz album that was at once musical, cultural, and technological.

**The LP Goes Live**

On June 18, 1948, Columbia Records held a press conference at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City to introduce the long-playing record. The technology, which the company referred to as “long-playing microgroove,” offered a series of interrelated innovations. Along with increasing the lifespan of the records, the stronger and more durable “vinylite” material could accommodate nearly three times the number of grooves per disc. These “microgrooves” resulted in longer, uninterrupted playback time, increased from four minutes per side for a 12-inch 78-rpm record to well over twenty. The less abrasive vinyl surface, tethered with a lighter, more sensitive electro-magnetic pickup and stylus, dramatically improved the signal to noise ratio. This meant a substantial increase in sound quality and playback fidelity. Coupled with the contemporaneous introduction of electromagnetic tape recording, Columbia’s LP afforded less weight and cost, more music
and durability, as well as better sound than any other technology to date. As an ad in *Billboard* rightly put it: “In 1948 Recorded Sound Took a New Turn.”6

Praise for the LP was typical of the postwar period. Advertisements and press announcements appealed to a rising consumer culture and emphasized how technological innovations would improve home entertainment. One 1948 ad in the *Los Angeles Times* reads: “Imagine a new tone quality so lifelike you’ll scarcely believe you’re listening to a record! New freedom from surface noise! Record storage problems gone! And broken records practically a thing of the past!”7 Another 1949 advertisement in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* summed up the LP’s innovations in six bullet points:

- Astonishing fidelity!
- Nonbreakable!
- Amazing savings!
- Save storage space!
- Eliminates surface noise!
- Complete performances on one record!8

Nestled among endorsements for lampshades, couches, bedroom furniture, and vacuum cleaners, this advertisement for the LP depicted a mother and father with a small child, sitting and listening together in the comfort of their living room. Each of these selling points addresses leisure time through an improved listening experience in the home.9 The resilient vinyl material extended a record’s lifetime, which translated into long-term

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9 Many, if not most, of these advertisements adopted Columbia’s own marketing strategy. For example, see the company’s 1948 report to stockholders: Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., “Annual Report to Stockholders for the Fiscal Year Ended January 1, 1949,” 22 March 1949, ProQuest Historical Annual Reports, 7–9, 28–29. The document reports the sale of 700,000 players and two million records in the first six months.
savings. Lengthier performances on disc meant more music in less space, a point accentuated in ads that sold players as attractive items for the home. Similar advertisements were ubiquitous in newspapers and magazines at the time.10

Columbia marketed the LP as a new technology even though most of the physical characteristics of the label’s discs had been around for several decades. In the 1930s, for example, the Union Carbide Company introduced vinyl resins for various home and industry products. For record manufacturers, the vinyl material was hard enough to support small grooves, nearly unbreakable in transport, and less prone to warping compared to the shellac discs of the 78-rpm era. For troops overseas during World War II, the US Government produced records made of vinyl to ensure that the discs survived the long trips to the front lines. Edison introduced a 12-inch, 40-minute record in 1926, but the format lacked the fidelity of contemporaneous technologies. From 1930 to 1931, Columbia experimented with five-minute per side pop records on its Harmony, Velvet Tone, and Clarion subsidiaries, but the material was too fragile to support the smaller grooves. RCA Victor similarly manufactured nine to ten minute records between 1931 and 1934 that rotated at 33 1/3 revolutions per minute. However, the depression-era economy could not support the buy-in costs for the new technology.11

11 Andre Millard, America on Record: A History of Recorded Sound (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 203–205. RCA solved the durability problem by using strong, gritty shellac called
Columbia overcame the issues of sound quality and durability through new production and manufacturing methods, aided by a strong post-WWII economy within the United States and a highly successful marketing campaign. The label adopted a marketing strategy from the Gillette Company, which priced its razors below market value in order to create sustainable demand for its product. Columbia worked with the Philco Radio and Television Company of Philadelphia to develop a player that would easily plug into popular radio, phonograph, or television units and priced at a moderate $29.95. This price eventually dropped to $9.95 in some locations. To persuade its competitors to adopt the LP technology, Columbia also standardized the manufacturing process and made this information freely available. The company also attempted to attract potential customers by repackaging and reissuing its most popular 78-rpm records on LP, giving listeners a way to hear familiar sounds using the new technology.

Still, it took years to re-standardize the industry. The initial investment in new playback equipment required potential customers to re-evaluate their listening habits. Record companies needed to research and develop new approaches to marketing and manufacturing. Audio engineers and record producers had to experiment with the finer details of the recording process to fully take advantage of the new technological

Vitrolac, which increased the life span of the discs but did so at the expense of increased surface noise. See: Alice Rogers, “Early Long Play Records,” *IAJRC Journal* 29.1 (1996), 34. For more on the development of the microgroove technology, see: Oliver Read and Walter L. Welch, *From Tin Foil to Stereo: Evolution of the Phonograph*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: H. W. Sams, 1976), 334–42.


Millard, *America on Record*, 205.
capabilities. The changing habitus of producers and consumers forced musicians to rethink their processes of music making, especially for popular and jazz artists. The material parameters began changing as well, as labels began replacing the blank paper sleeves of the 78-rpm era with record jackets that contained intricate photos, artwork, liner notes, and other forms of advertising. With regards to sound, innovations in signal processing led to alternative means of mixing, mastering, and other forms of post-production. Programming on albums changed to accommodate the longer playing time, eventually leading to concept or themed albums and artist retrospectives.

These developments led to a profound transformation for jazz. Dan Morgenstern, the illustrious jazz critic and historian, arrived in the United States in 1947 and made his way into the jazz industry while the LP was still an evolving technology.\(^{15}\) When I spoke with him in March 2012, he recalled this transitional time for jazz:

There is something that’s often misunderstood when America is compared to Europe in terms of jazz audiences. The US is a huge country—it’s enormous, as big as all of Europe. In a European country, take a country like Denmark or Holland, if you are a jazz fan and there is a significant player or jazz event in Rotterdam and you live in Amsterdam, you go on the train or you drive. It takes you, at most, an hour and a half. If you’re in New York and there is a terrific jazz festival in Seattle, it becomes a little more complicated. So what happened with the LPs was that a lot of people who liked jazz, but were in places where first-class musicians were seldom heard, got a taste of what it’s like to hear a live performance, to hear musicians stretching out. It changed the listening habits and it became a much more—young musicians and students could study these recordings and analyze the solos. It was a big sea change, you know, it was.\(^{16}\)

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\(^{15}\) Born in Munich, Germany in 1929, Morgenstern grew up in Denmark and Amsterdam where he became a devoted jazz listener. His enthusiasm for the music would carry him through a lengthy career as the editor of *Down Beat* and *Metronome*, a Grammy Award winning author (for liner notes), and the eventual director of the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers-Newark.

\(^{16}\) Dan Morgenstern, interview with the author, 8 March 2012.
Morgenstern describes an oft-repeated sentiment about jazz and the LP: the recording format ushered in a new way of interacting with the music because it brought listeners closer to the live performance; this, in turn, altered how musicians, critics, and other listeners understood the music’s history. Musicians, Morgenstern continued, liked the space that the lengthier recording time gave them, especially for sidemen on a recording date who were often only given the opportunity to solo for a half chorus, if at all. Producers also became increasingly involved in the recording session details, even though record labels as a whole were slow to adjust their marketing, pricing, and other infrastructure. “It took a while for studio recordings to take advantage of this new format,” he continued, “because they were still locked into the three minute thing. You know, the record industry was basically conservative—it took longer than you might expect for the 12-inch to replace the 10-inch discs.”

Changes were inevitable, however. The decade saw the blossoming of independent jazz labels such as Prestige, Blue Note, Riverside, and Verve that issued hundreds of records in widely different jazz sub-styles. Musicians increasingly had more say in the repertory and personnel selections, which led to the creation of a sizable corpus of jazz standards and iconic albums. Large jazz festivals in Newport, Rhode Island and Monterey, California debuted in 1954 and 1958, respectively, a product of jazz’s growing associations with mass commercialism in locations of elite white culture. Beginning in 1956, the US State Department began using jazz for international missions of cultural exchange. As the

\[\text{\footnotesize\text{\textsuperscript{7}}Ibid.}\]
music moved freely through all strata of US culture during the 1950s, jazz and its practitioners troubled the lines of race and class, and fearlessly crossed social and political boundaries. The LP developed in relation to these trends, eventually becoming the dominant medium in which the music continued to circulate.

§

At the Vanguard of Vinyl is about record making—that is, the choices made while performing, recording, producing, designing, and circulating music on record. The introduction of long-playing technology by Columbia Records in 1948 eventually led to the now-ubiquitous 12-inch vinyl record, musical objects that have iconic status with jazz listeners all over the world. The decades-long dominance of the LP has made the adoption and integration of the media seem brief and uneventful. I contend that this outcome was not a determined one but a result that unfolded over a ten-year span as record makers experimented with how best to leverage the potential of this new technology. The ability to record past the three-minute limitations of the 78-rpm era dramatically influenced how musicians and record labels approached their craft and business. The emphasis on improvisation in jazz—the high value ascribed to music made in the moment of performance—offers a particular vantage point to this moment of media in transition. Historiographically, the generally more impactful music of the late fifties and sixties has obscured the period of unease that accompanied the LP’s introduction, when the trials and errors of the industry and increasingly visible sociocultural activities of musicians
significantly influenced the development and reception of the music. Above all, I assert that this transition is best understood through sound.

A core premise of this study is that records are more than the product of a singular musician or ensemble from a particular time and location. Like all commercially produced records, LPs are inherently mediated objects, the result of small and large decisions by historically situated cultural producers with different philosophies about music and individual approaches to the technology of sound reproduction. By examining the correlation between performance and its reproductions during this period, I ask: Who are the agents of mediation and what sociocultural factors influence how they make decisions about sound? How do the sonic, graphic, and verbal modes of representation on record act reciprocally with concurrent struggles for racial equality? What can the emergence of the jazz album reveal about the relationship of sound to culture, technology to power, and mediation to cultural agency?

At the Vanguard of Vinyl is a cultural history of the jazz LP. As commercial objects made for mass consumption, records are the product of social structures and cultural schema that surround the business and artistic creation of music. Ideological underpinnings about sound and technology guide the decisions of record makers and, as a result, the outcome often changes drastically from musician to musician, producer to producer, and label to label. A history of the jazz LP is not only about musical style; it is a history about changing conceptions of time through technology, jazz’s place at the intersections of Cold War politics and Afro-modernities, and the means in which sonic technologies create different auralities and acoustemologies. Treated as cultural objects,
LPs have the potential to reveal how musicians, record producers, audio engineers, and other industry professionals worked together to create music that remains in continuous circulation more than a half-century later.

**Technology, Performance, Time**

The LP was one of several technologies that redefined perceptions of time and space for people living in the United States during the 1950s. In 1951, President Harry Truman conducted the first transcontinental television broadcast when forty-nine cities across the country watched his speech before the Japanese Peace Treaty Conference announcing the official end to US postwar occupation of Japan. That same year also marked the first TV broadcast of a live sporting event. In the years following, the introduction of the vidicon pickup tube made it possible to construct portable TV cameras—notably RCA's “Walkie-Lookie” camera (1953)—and the invention of the transistor radio by Texas Instruments (1954) led to the mass production of pocket-sized radio devices. In 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act, a law that authorized the construction of the Interstate Highway System and began the largest public works project in US history to date. Russia’s 1957 launch of Sputnik 1, the first Earth-made satellite, caused Cold War panic in part because it made the possibility of space exploration and intercontinental ballistic missiles a reality. Though many Americans could not afford it, commercial airline travel became increasingly popular and accessible in the mid- to late-

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1950s. Images of flight and worldwide travel filled popular magazines and newspapers, a sentiment immortalized on Frank Sinatra’s 1958 LP *Come Fly with Me.*

Several other technologies enabled more rapid exchange of information. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved color TV in 1951; the first political TV ads appeared a year later. In 1954, the same year the term “fiber optics” was coined, scientists Harold Hopkins and Narinder Singh Kapany published a significant article in *Nature* that demonstrated some practical abilities of transmitting data using light. Along with the development of solar cells and magnetic computer hard drives, the mid-1950s saw other scientific breakthroughs, including the invention of the digital modem (1958), commercial copy machine (1959), and the integrated circuit, popularly known as a microchip (1959). Though it would be several years, or in some cases several decades, before such innovations made their way into most homes or offices, these technologies made it possible for information to circulate easier and faster than ever before. The expansion of mass communication also resulted from the increase in mass consumerism, whereby the economic strength of the middle class led to more leisure time and expendable income for millions of people nationwide.

At the broadest level, these technological advances together shifted the notion of proximity. Information traveling more efficiently across wide geographical regions

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59 My thanks to Matthew Somoroff for first suggesting the connection of Sinatra’s album to the broader cultural imagination of an ever-expanding world within the United States. A full citation of Sinatra’s album can be found in the discography at the end of this chapter.  
brought far-off events into the homes of millions of people, especially with increasingly cheaper avenues of personal entertainment. More control over the networks of distribution also brought more invasive forms of mediation and, thus, greater power over reproduction and representation. The increased mediatization of time began to alter people’s perceptions of space and place.

It is difficult to overstate the significance of these changes for the music business. In the early-1950s, recordings began outselling sheet music for the first time. As recordings became one of the dominant forms of musical consumption and distribution, larger media conglomerates like Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) and its largest competitor, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), devoted more financial resources to making and selling records. At the same time, the growing popularity of television created more avenues for promoting music. The Steve Allen Show, eventually renamed The Tonight Show, premiered in September 1954 on the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) TV network to compete with CBS’s popular Ed Sullivan Show, which had been on the air since 1948. These shows programmed music on a regular basis, especially since a company like CBS could cross-promote its recording artists on TV, radio, and film. Additionally, the late-1940s introduction of electromagnetic tape recording brought with it new forms of temporal mediation—recordings could now be cut up, reformed, and changed around.

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22 As their names suggest, CBS and RCA were both similarly invested in other forms of mass communication, including radio and television. The lab that produced the LP, for example, also produced CBS’s technology for color TV.

The addition of stereophonic recording and incipient multi-tracking technology at the end of the decade would have enormous ramifications for the industry in the years to come. More technological control over sound meant more control over the perception of time as it relates to musical performance.

The increased possibilities of manipulating recorded performance, particularly through the advent of magnetic tape, led to what Mary Ann Doane describes as “unreal” time. “The very idea of a time that is real,” writes Doane in her work on still photography, “presupposes an unreal time, a technologically produced and mediated time.”24 Doane’s understanding of unreal time as the flip side of “real time” rests on the tension between the live event and its mediated representation. She uses the live television broadcast as an example. These broadcasts make events instantaneously appear, a process which is only possible through sophisticated machines that project what performance studies theorist Rebecca Schneider refers to as the “lure of synchronicity.”25 In this respect, the technologies of the late-1940s and early-1950s translated new ways of thinking about sound, time, and space into a discourse of real time that gave the impression of instantaneous access and synchronous witnessing.

The technological lure of synchronicity is the foundation of recorded music. The invention and commercial adoption of sound recording at the end of the nineteenth century caused an enormous shift in the relationship between performance and its

reproduction. The LP, as a technology of unreal time, was at the center of a similar cultural change in the 1950s. The stronger vinyl material resulted in more grooves per disc and longer playback, which meant that more time was being put into smaller spaces and with greater sound quality. This was a form of sonic compression, related to the progressively more efficient exchange of information happening at many different levels in US culture. During the roughly ten-year period of the LPs introduction and wide-scale adoption within the United States, greater compression and fidelity altered what it meant to package and sell music while the increased forms of mediation reshaped musical performance, both on stage and in the studio. Large-scale changes in notions of time and space led to new conceptions of musical time and performance space.

There are many examples of unreal time on 1950s jazz recordings. Charles Mingus overdubbed bass lines onto Jazz at Massey Hall, a famous 1953 recording he made with bebop luminaries Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, and Max Roach. George Avakian made numerous records in unreal time between 1954 and 1956 as a record producer for Columbia. For example, he spliced together two separate recordings of “Jumpin’ at the Woodside” to make a single track that appeared on a 1954 Buck Clayton LP by the same name. Avakian also added crowd noise to cover up splices and other adjustments on Ellington at Newport (1956) and manufactured several Louis Armstrong performances by adding audience applause to music recorded in an empty concert hall.

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28 Mingus’s label, Debut, recorded and issued this concert on three 10-inch LPs.
This music appeared on Ambassador Satch, a 1956 LP. Irving Townsend, who succeeded Avakian at Columbia, similarly fabricated live audiences on two Ellington LPs issued in 1958: At the Bal Masque and Newport 1958. The accompanying liner notes, press releases, and other material produced by the labels helped listeners understand these recordings as real time performances, despite their creation using technologies of unreal time. Placed in context of changing conceptions of musical time, these LPs were products of expert uses of new technological capabilities. Moreover, the records sold well: Ambassador Satch and Ellington at Newport were both top-five sellers on the jazz charts for long periods of 1956 and 1957, respectively, according to Down Beat (see Figures 1, 2).

![1956 Top Jazz Sellers: Ambassador Satch](image)

Figure 1. Ambassador Satch, position on best-seller charts according to Down Beat.
The concept of “unreal” time resonates throughout this study, not only as an analytic to understand ontological questions about performance and reproduction, but also as a means of understanding a particular moment in jazz history. As it became increasingly possible to edit music away from its performance and recording, record companies, audio producers and engineers, musicians, and other industry professionals at the beginning of the LP era were forced to make decisions about what these new capabilities meant to them. Practices often varied. Some like Avakian had a heavy hand, while others sought to remove their presence from the recording as much as possible. Label owners Norman Granz and Bob Weinstock, for example, never called themselves

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producers, but only “supervisors.” Each decision demonstrated an approach to mediation, recording, and listening. Throughout this study, my analysis focuses on how specific technological innovations affected the structures of record producing and music making. As such, I am not interested in questions of authenticity or synchronicity in their own right because jazz records are never in real time—or are never only in real time. Rather, I wish to use these blurred moments of un/real time to understand how the industry reimagined jazz on record and, in doing so, renegotiated the music’s cultural position within the United States.

By addressing the relationship between music making and its reproduction, At the Vanguard of Vinyl connects to long-standing debates in performance studies that date back to the early 1990s, especially in the work of Peggy Phelan, Philip Auslander, Diana Taylor, Fred Moten, and Rebecca Schneider. While there are often dramatic disagreements between them, each of these authors attempts to make sense of the social and political complexities within a cultural economy that places high value on the synchronicity between creative events and their reproductions. This study adds to this body of literature in two ways. Though history figures prominently in each of these studies (albeit in different ways), these authors often gloss over the development and usage of

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30 I take this formation from Rebecca Schneider, who usefully questions the naturalized sense of linear time with respect to theatrical performance. Writing about the way that history figures into onstage performance through temporal “syncopation,” she writes that theater “can never be ‘live.’ Or, never only live.” Schneider, Performing Remains, 92.
specific technologies of mediation, in part because their objects of analysis and research questions do not necessitate such work. Additionally, these authors largely do not address those who have control over the apparatuses of mediation, though they would all agree that that mediation does not happen passively. Here, my approach to the creative and aesthetic choices of mediation at the site of production, especially regarding the global circulation of recorded objects, relies heavily on the ethnomusicological work of Louise Meintjes and Thomas Porcello, with Steven Feld often adding some accompaniment in the lower frequencies. Through a focus on the jazz LP during a moment of enormous technological transition, I interrogate what historically situated notions of recording and production reveal about performance and its mechanical reproductions.

**The LP and Jazz in the 1950s**

This study argues that the introduction of the LP fundamentally changed what jazz on record meant. I understand the LP as a technology born of a postwar consumerism that

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re-inscribed the uneven power relations and operational structures of the music industry. For African American jazz musicians in the 1950s, LPs were objects of representation carefully curated by producers and industry executives who acted as silent mediators, differently invested in the discourses that surrounded the music. In this way, records were also objects of political discourse that disseminated multiple notions of race and identity. Though musicians had enormous influence over the musical stage, they struggled to gain more commercial control over their representations, in part because the necessary financial resources were not available to them. As the forms of representation shifted during the LP’s adoption, so too did the music’s relationship with white mainstream culture, Western European musical aesthetics, US political structures, and Afro-modernism. Issues of race were never far beneath the surface.

*At the Vanguard of Vinyl* adds to a body of scholarship that considers jazz and race within the United States at the midcentury. The work of Ingrid Monson, Scott Saul, Eric Porter, Penny Von Eschen, Mark Anthony Neal, and Guthrie Ramsey contribute substantially to my understanding of how racial politics figures into music making and


34 My treatment here of technology is indebted to Michel Foucault, and particularly Michael Behrent’s reading of the philosopher: Michael C. Behrent, “Foucault and Technology,” *History and Technology* 29, no. 1 (2013). For more on technologies of reproduction and black resistance, see: Moten, *In the Break*.

jazz musicians’ wide-ranging political activity during this period.\textsuperscript{36} Writing about a broad spectrum of topics, these authors show how jazz making in the 1950s was an activity of constant negotiation and contradiction, especially for African American artists. Jazz musicians fought against structures of racism while simultaneously appealing to the sympathies of left-leaning political figures, placed the music’s ethos of the black vernacular in dialogue with “serious” European musical aesthetics, campaigned to perform in concert halls while also circulating through mass popular culture, and leveraged strategies of racial uplift against the structures of white privilege. These actions collectively created a form of Afro-modernism that drew from multiple aesthetic streams, refused reductive definitions, and explicitly combined musical style with social practices. Throughout this study, I understand jazz as a form of Afro-modernism that gathered its strength from (and defined itself through) the ingenuity of jazz musicians performing and making records in different ways.\textsuperscript{37}

Despite their indispensable contributions, these authors tend to use the 1950s as a means of looking forward to the 1960s—and often beyond—to when jazz most explicitly intersects with the struggle for civil rights and social equality. This tendency is most


\textsuperscript{37} For a clear definition of Afro-modernism and an explanation of its intellectual genealogy, see: Jeffrey Magee, “Kinds of Blue: Miles Davis, Afro-Modernism, and the Blues,” Jazz Perspectives 1, no. 1 (2007), 6–9. For more on how Afro-modernist ideals functioned in different jazz styles throughout the 1950s, see: Monson, Freedom Sounds, 66–106.
apparent in the consideration of record technology. Generally, the musico-political trajectory of this body of literature understands the technological advances in commercial record making from a deterministic perspective that assumes that the transition to the LP format happened quickly because there was already a desire for such recordings to exist and the means to produce them. This naturalized treatment of the LP, I maintain, does not account for the diverse approaches to record production and record making that characterized the first decade of the LP era. It is instructive that experiments with the early jazz LP occurred at the precise moment that musicians, producers, and sound engineers redefined the music in line with a developing Afro-modernity on a national and often international stage.

To examine this historical shift, I rely on jazz scholarship that has considered how ideologies of race shaped musical development within the United States, especially how jazz musicians on stage operated within a social system where tropes of racial difference marked location, audience, and musical style.\(^{38}\) I add to this work through my consideration of sound processing and how sound reproduction technologies mediate constructions of race.\(^{39}\) By situating acoustic and musical detail within African American

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\(^{39}\) My approach to the intersection of technological mediation and constructions of race relies on: Meintjes, *Sound of Africa!*; Miller, *Segregating Sound*; Gitelman, “Recording Sound, Recording Race,
political history, *At the Vanguard of Vinyl* reveals the integral position of sonic media to cultural debates about race and aurality within the United States in the 1950s. In doing so, this study articulates how innovations in sonic technologies and the attendant, rapid rise in mass consumption of music contributed to the renegotiation of African Americans’ social position around the world.

**Records and Jazz Studies**

Various musicians, critics, listeners, and scholars have reflected on how long-playing technology released musicians from the restraints of the 78-rpm record.⁴⁰ Alun Morgan’s forward to Jack Gordon’s *Fifties Jazz Talk* is a paragon:

> Because so much of what happens in jazz is ephemeral, it is essential to place on record, and in the correct chronology, the event which led to the creation of so much outstanding music. The fifties saw many changes, including the premature death of Charlie Parker, the fountain of so much that had happened in the previous decade. There was also the launch of the long-plying record, a piece of technology which was to have a considerable effect on jazz, for it enabled the “three-minute limit” of the 78 rpm disc to be overcome.⁴¹

In this passage, Morgan emphasizes the necessity of recording technology to capture the ephemera of jazz beyond the constraints—or “limits”—of the 78-rpm format. The death of Charlie Parker placed within this context also demonstrates how death and dying haunt

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the process of capturing performance on record. Recordings are technologies of preservation, giving the appearance of bringing past musical performances into the present.\(^\text{42}\) Parker may have died, but his recordings continue to circulate, his music existing with a life of its own. Morgan’s brief statement about the long-playing record, bookending Parker’s death between the ephemeral nature of jazz and the freedom afforded by the technology, reveals how the movement from the past to the present lies at the center of how jazz listeners often conceive of records.

The earliest jazz writers understood the significance of mechanical reproduction to jazz history. Enthusiasts in France were among the first to write seriously about the music and they did so through records, likely because that was the avenue by which jazz most readily traveled. Hugues Panassié, a founding member of the *Hot Club de France*, wrote in 1934 that, “In jazz . . . the actual performance is itself most important; it cannot be recaptured without a record. The phonograph record, which preserves all performances, is thus the ideal medium for preserving swing music.”\(^\text{43}\) Panassié’s colleague, Charles Delaunay, authored the first jazz discography in 1936, which both popularized the term “discography” and established an organizational schema still used today.\(^\text{44}\)

emphasized the role that technology had in the study of jazz: “In recordings, the music, whose value lies in its performance, found its only means of preservation. Hence the prime importance of the phonograph record for the study of jazz.”

Writers in the United States expressed similar sentiments equating records with the preservation of a performance. Martin Lindsey wrote in 1958 that “real jazz” could not be written in Western notation and, as a result, “the gramophone record is the means of communicating in jazz.”

A decade later, in one of the first musicological studies of jazz, Gunther Schuller used transcriptions of recordings to analyze the stylistic developments of early jazz. In his preface, Schuller writes about the lack of a musical score, which forces the jazz historian to “evaluate the only thing that is available to him [sic]: the recording.”

Like Panassié, Delaunay, Lindsey, and others before him, Schuller was attempting to validate the study of jazz using a language of “serious” music legible to cultural elites: for him, recordings were mechanically reproduced replacements for the score or “work.”

I discuss the relationship between the ideals of high art modernism and jazz records in


46 Martin Lindsay, _Teach Yourself Jazz_ (London: English Universities Press, 1958), 11.


chapter 1, but here I wish to emphasize how these writers often describe records as a means of preserving the music in its original state, again evoking the sentiments of life and death. French philosopher Jacque Attali put it like this: “Reproduction, in a certain sense, is the death of the original, the triumph of the copy.”49 Jazz records represent a musical haunting of cultural significance.50

Authors within jazz scholarship first challenged the notion of the recording-as-work paradigm through a critique of canon formation, putting pressure on an evolutionary model of jazz history that privileges progress through the innovation of individual musicians.51 Some approached this historiographic issue by examining how constant discursive repetition has added to the naturalized presence of recordings in the telling of jazz history.52 Others turned towards ethnography, working with musicians to underscore how records function as social, educational, and performative objects.53 Despite some persuasive work about the relationship between mechanical reproduction and jazz history, especially by David Ake and Jed Rasula, many writers continue to regard jazz

50 For more on the idea of death, performance, and reproduction, see: Taylor, The Archive and the Repertoire, 142–43.
records as singular acts of artistry. This includes recent monographs in the Oxford Studies in Recorded Jazz that concentrate on the iconic records of Miles Davis, Benny Goodman, Keith Jarrett, Louis Armstrong, and the Carnegie Hall concert recording of the Thelonious Monk Quartet with John Coltrane. Although these studies are sensitive to the role that records play in the capturing and dissemination of musical performance, these authors generally do not consider the history of recording technology, theorize the recorded object, or examine the role of the producer in depth. Several studies attend to the global circulation of jazz recordings; however, jazz studies as a whole has still been

54 David Andrew Ake, *Jazz Matters: Sound, Place, and Time since Bebop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Rasula, “The Media of Memory.”


56 In the last fifteen years, several trade monographs have had a similar focus on individual records, including Miles Davis’s *Kind of Blue*, John Coltrane’s *A Love Supreme*, and Duke Ellington’s *Ellington at Newport*. In total, these studies offer detailed and convincing accounts of how each record came to be, pointing to the myriad of personal, financial, and musical components involved in the creation of such objects. Published for a nonacademic audience (as much of jazz literature is), these authors reaffirm the record as the location of musical genius. Theorization about the place of records in jazz historiography and other philosophical questions about capturing sound on record is not their goal. See: Ashley Kahn, *Kind of Blue: The Making of the Miles Davis Masterpiece* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2000); Ashley Kahn, *A Love Supreme: The Story of John Coltrane’s Signature Album* (New York: Viking, 2002); John Fass Morton, *Backstory in Blue: Ellington at Newport ’56* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Richard Williams, *The Blue Moment: Miles Davis’ Kind of Blue and the Remaking of Modern Music* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009); Eric Nisenson, *The Making of Kind of Blue: Miles Davis and His Masterpiece* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000); Ashley Kahn, *The House That Trane Built: The Story of Impulse Records* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006).
slow to adopt and extend methodologies that address how technology functions in the transformation of culture.\textsuperscript{57}

\textit{At the Vanguard of Vinyl} argues that the advent of the LP altered the various ways that jazz records functioned as social and semiotic objects. It draws from several bodies of scholarly literature in order to understand the LP as a cultural object that contains historically specific notions of technology, record making, and listening. In doing so, it expands the historical scope of jazz-fusion scholarship that considers studio production and multi-track recording into the 1950s.\textsuperscript{58} Through a focus on the material characteristics, visual design, and musical content of these records, this study understands these cultural objects as mutually influenced by and productive of social value.

\section*{Notes}

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On Discographies and the Archive

Music scholarship tends to regard records as singular objects, one mass-produced version relatively equal to another. Discographies, for example, generally include session data such as recording date, location, personnel and instrumentation, tracks recorded (including alternate and interrupted takes), matrix numbers, and sometimes other relevant historical data about the session. Most include extensive release histories through lists of catalog numbers that stretch across different time periods. Producers and recording engineers are rarely included, an omission that obscures the collaborative artistic labor needed to produce such records. Such exclusions are, in part, the result of a research emphasis on artist biography and teleological understanding of musical development, where the analytic goals foreground recording dates rather than when (and sometimes if) those recordings began to circulate publicly.  

I consult discographies on a daily basis and could not have completed this research without them. However, my interest in the moment of circulation necessitated that I

59 Recall that the practice of discography emerged from 1930s French record collectors when session data was not readily available and jazz was a musical tradition only a few decades old. Bruce D. Epperson, More Important Than the Music: A History of Jazz Discography (Chicago: Univeristy of Chicago Press, 2013).
60 This includes Michael Cuscuna and Michel Ruppli’s wonderful discography of Blue Note Records, as well as Ruppli’s equally thorough reference focused on Prestige Records. Michael Cuscuna and Michel Ruppli, The Blue Note Label: A Discography (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001); Michel Ruppli, The Prestige Label: A Discography (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980). There are several excellent websites that have been indispensable to me as well: Peter Losin’s “Miles Ahead,” a rich and incredibly detailed discography of Miles Davis (http://www.plosin.com/); the expansive “Jazz Discography Project” compiled by Nobuaki Togashi, Kohji Matsubayashi, and Masayuki Hatta (www.jazzdisco.org); the visual discography of Torbjörn Sörhuss’s “Birka Jazz Archive” (http://www.birkajazz.com/archive/prestige.htm); and the always thought provoking “London Jazz Collector” (https://londonjazzcollector.wordpress.com/).
treat each release as a unique object, historically situated in its specific technological moment. Consider the four versions of *Ellington at Newport* mentioned above. Across these records, the personnel, arrangements, and improvisations of the Ellington ensemble remain consistent, although the most recent version of this record includes previously unissued recordings. Despite these similarities, each record was the product of a particular technological moment. The 1956 LP was the first mainstream recording of the Newport Jazz Festival and an experiment in recording at an outdoor venue. As I detail in chapter 2, the audience applause added in post-production resulted from highly professional use of cutting edge technology to save the recording for release. Columbia’s electronically re-channeled for stereo LP was the company’s attempt at accounting for newly available stereophonic capabilities of recording and playback. The 1987 disc was among the label’s first LP-to-CD conversions; it appeared at a time when the industry had not yet adjusted to digital modes of production. (The CD was introduced in the United States in 1983.) The 1999 CD, on the other hand, celebrated Ellington’s 100th birthday and appeared during the height of the CD’s popularity.\(^6\) Phil Schaap’s production removed the added crowd noise and claimed to restore the album to its original condition. These four versions are ostensibly the same record, yet discographies, as a text-based genre, do not account for how these technological contexts changed the *sound* of each record.

At the Vanguard of Vinyl relies on many different records, some of which contain the same music but differ significantly in their format, packaging, visual design, mastering processes, or other production techniques. Each chapter emphasizes one or two records in order to examine a particular aspect of record making that was in flux during the period. In the text, I include the artist, record title, and year of issue. The other details of each of these records, including label and catalog number, can be found listed at the end of each chapter.62 Similar to the lists of records that instigated this study, these chapter discographies are analytically compiled though certainly not complete.

This work happened in the archive. The massive record collection at the Institute of Jazz Studies (IJS) contains nearly-complete sets of label catalogs, organized sequentially by catalog number and grouped by recording format. As hundreds of records passed through my hands—including the early jazz LPs of Atlantic, Blue Note, Columbia, Decca, Dial, Prestige, Riverside, and Verve—I began to examine the record catalogs of each company sequentially, which revealed how marketing and design strategies began to change over time. Prestige’s early LPs, for example, were blank on the back of the record jacket. By the tenth LP, catalog advertisements appeared; liner notes began on the eighteenth as Prestige found new ways of using the blank spaces on the front and back of their records. Throughout this study, I use such details to analyze what such changes reveal about jazz at this particular historical moment. The ways in which companies organize photos, lay

62 A complete discographical listing can also be found in the bibliography at the end of this study. I cite liner notes like any other written document, although these notes should always be understood in connection with their recorded object.
out liner notes, and treat promotional material disclose specific values and philosophies of record making. I connect such details to the sounds on record, with an eye and ear toward how these audio and visual elements work together. In this way, my methodology differs from studies that tell a single artist’s biography through his or her records alone. From the archive, new trends and discourses emerge.

**Final Cuts**

This dissertation interrogates moments of performance, the mechanical inscription of those moments, and the mediating processes involved in making them into commercial records. I concentrate on how diverse networks of professionals overlap in a matrix of creative agency where individuals make choices about sound and its representations. I focus on musical mistakes, announcements and interactions from the bandstand, and the aural presence of the audience or musician. To do so, I attend to choices made during audio production: tape edits, microphone placement, the mixing of sound levels and instrument balance, room sound, overdubbing, and other sound processing effects. I connect such decisions to the visual and tactile attributes of these discs in order to understand the music as the combined product of different kinds of technological and artistic labor.

Each chapter uses iconic jazz recordings to link specific innovations in record making to concurrent contestations about race within US culture. Chapter 1 argues that early-1950s experiments in recording lengthy improvisations in the studio extended notions of jazz modernism from the prewar period. I relate the decision to incorporate
musical “mistakes” on several Miles Davis records to the business strategies of Prestige records during the first years of the LP. Duke Ellington’s 1956 recording at the Newport Jazz Festival is the subject of chapter 2. Here, I trace how recording live jazz in spaces of elite white culture contributed to the continued growth of a white mainstream audience for jazz. Chapter 3 focuses on the intersection of jazz, race, and international Cold War politics in the mid-1950s. I analyze two Dizzy Gillespie LPs that leverage the trumpeter’s position as the first State Department jazz ambassador to connect jazz to the emerging struggle for civil rights within the United States. Chapter 4 uses the LPs of Cannonball Adderley to construct a history of live records made in jazz clubs. I argue that Adderley’s records innovatively captured a sonic black sociality on record and, in doing so, embraced a new form of late-1950s Afro-modernity.

Records are bought, sold, traded, copied, archived—listened to and avidly talked about by musicians, fans, academics, journalists, educators, and industry professionals—and discussed in history books, trade magazines, newspapers, and internet forums. *At the Vanguard of Vinyl* asserts that the jazz album as it is understood today was born in the 1950s, when the advent of the LP, combined with other innovations in recording technology, made the improvised moments cherished by jazz listeners infinitely more reproducible. Through a detailed account of musical media in transition, the following chapters interpret the materialization of the jazz LP as the result of social, political, and musical forces in tandem, offering new insights into the cooperative processes of artistic labor from which jazz recordings emerge.


**Introduction Discography**


Chapter 1

At the Margins of Music:
The Early LPs of Miles Davis

In a small New York City recording studio on October 5, 1951, Miles Davis and his sextet record a strolling, sometimes meandering blues. The nearly ten-minute track, titled “Bluing,” ends with looseness uncommon for commercially recorded jazz from this period. At the close of the final chorus, Sonny Rollins plays a cadential figure to initiate a seemingly conventional ritardando (9:40). Davis and his bassist Tommy Potter catch it easily but Art Blakey continues, his ride cymbal oblivious to the rest of the ensemble. Davis and Potter attempt to salvage the confusion by playing a few more notes—this strategy fails. Blakey, eventually realizing his mistake, slows down with a few cymbal hits and concludes with his characteristic snare roll punctuated by a final rim shot. Reacting to the musical miscommunication, Davis voices his frustration towards Blakey, saying something like, “Play the ending, man—you know the arrangement” (9:51). Nothing about this session is routine.
Bob Weinstock, founder of Prestige Records, issued “Bluing” in 1952 on the A-side of a 10-inch LP titled *Miles Davis: Blue Period.* It was one of first records to take advantage of long-playing technology. At about nine minutes and fifty seconds, “Bluing” extends well beyond the three-minute limit of the 78-rpm era. Kept on record, the imperfect ending was an experiment in using this new technology and an attempt to bring listeners into the spaces of music making previously inaccessible.

The accompanying liner notes by Ira Gitler single out this imperfect ending as a highlight of the disc:

An album by Miles Davis represents modern jazz as its best. In this album, as in Miles’ PRESTIGE LP 124, the length of time for each selection is not restricted to the usual limits except in the case of BLUE ROOM, which was cut at a more conventional session. BLUING, the high spot on this set, is over nine minutes of freedom of expression on modern blues chord changes. At the very end, Art Blakey continues playing after everyone else has stopped. If you listen closely, you will hear Miles say something like, “You know that ending man, let’s do it again,” but why do it again when you’ve captured the feeling in the solos of Walter Bishop, Miles, Sonny Rollins, Jack McLean, and the inventive drumming of Art Blakey. The advantage given by LP, of not having to make a “product” for the juke boxes, allowed us to keep this take. OUT OF THE BLUE (Miles’ plea to get happy) was done at the same session and although not as lengthy as BLUING still provided ample time for relaxed improvisation.

By contrasting the freedom afforded by the LP with the restrictions of conventional recording methods, Gitler celebrates the ability to record musical expression seemingly without restraint. Mistakes on “Bluing,” Gitler emphasizes, are not for mainstream,

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1 This album also included “Out of the Blue” from the same session and “Blue Room” from an earlier session in January 1951.
2 Ira Gitler, liner notes to *Miles Davis: Blue Period*, Miles Davis, Prestige PRLP 140, LP (10in), 1952. Davis’s group based “Out of the Blue” on the harmonic structure of “Get Happy,” the well-known standard by Harold Arlen. Gitler attempts to key listeners into this fact with the parenthetical phrase: “OUT OF THE BLUE (Miles’ plea to get happy).”
commercial jukeboxes, but rather for listeners that understand “modern” musical expression. Gitler’s use of the phrase “modern jazzmen” echoes the view of Prestige’s founder and owner, Bob Weinstock. Describing his approach to record making, Weinstock told *Down Beat* in 1954 that he was most interested in recording musicians “who are trying to advance jazz.” Recording jazz at its best, from this view, necessitates the use of new and innovative recording technology. The repetitive use of the word “modern” points to a specific technological and musical discourse during a time of disruption, possibility, and exploration.

In the ten-year period after Columbia introduced the LP in 1948, jazz record labels found numerous ways to reinvent the jazz record. Some labels began issuing live concert recordings made in small jazz clubs, European concert halls, and at outdoor festivals. Others recorded in-studio jam sessions or extended compositions that combined jazz and art music traditions. Albums based around a specific theme or concept became much more common, including sets of reissued recordings from iconic artists. Writing for the *New York Times* in 1958, the ten-year anniversary of the LP, columnist John Wilson wrote that for the first time jazz records could feature “free-wheeling performances” that were “unrestricted by studio formality.” Like Gitler’s comments above, Wilson’s distinction between “free” and “formality” rests on social, musical, and technological lines:

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4 Wilson also noted that these lengthy recordings “could not have been squeezed onto a 78-rpm disc even if anybody had thought of doing it at the time.” John Wilson, “Unbound Jazz: Invention of LP Gave Jam Session Space,” *New York Times*, 16 March 1958, XX22.
playing capabilities enabled musicians to improvise beyond the rigid three-minute conventions of the 78-rpm format; by implication, this brought recorded performances much closer to jazz’s natural state. While new technological possibilities brought new avenues of musical exploration, however, it took several years to rethink entrenched business habits and restructure industry practices. The mistakes heard on “Bluing” were an early example of how labels like Prestige strived to newly capture jazz in process.

This chapter focuses on Prestige’s early LPs, which attempted to place moments of informal music making onto record for the first time. Though I analyze what this newly mediated reality on jazz records meant for the genre as a whole in the early- to mid-1950s, I focus primarily on Prestige’s changing approach to the visual, physical, and sonic design of its records, especially those of Miles Davis. I begin with a broad overview of Prestige’s record making approach in the early-1950s. I examine how the label adopted and then extended notions of jazz modernism from the previous decade, analyzing Prestige’s activities in relation to concurrent struggles around jazz and race. During this time, the idea of modern came to have particular significance for how Prestige treated Davis’s music on LP, especially as the label released the same music across many different recording formats. Many of these LP variants existed for only a brief time but nevertheless reveal a great deal about this moment of media in transition. I then trace Davis’s music chronologically and by format, from his first 10-inch LPs through Prestige’s short-lived experiments with 7-inch extended play (EP) and eventually to Davis’s celebrated 12-inch LP albums. Like the records under consideration here, I conclude by circling back to “Bluing” and resituate that 1951 record within its technological and cultural moment.
Musical mistakes and informal studio chatter are at the margins of music, but as I argue throughout, it is precisely at these edges where the jazz album was born.

**Jazz Modernism and Prestige Records**

Prestige’s company slogan appeared somewhere on every one of the label’s early LPs, usually on the back jacket and written in capital letters: “PRESTIGE PRESENTS THE OUTSTANDING MODERN MUSICIAN ON LP.” The word “modern” had a ubiquitous presence in promotional materials and anywhere that the label could print text or graphics. Records with modern in the title included: *Kai Winding, J.J. Johnson: Modern Jazz Trombones* (1951); *Fats Navarro, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Kenny Dorham: Modern Jazz Trumpets* (1951); *J.J. Johnson, Bennie Green: Modern Jazz Trombones, Vol. 2* (1951); and *The Modern Jazz Quartet* (1953). Several other LPs used the word “new” to similar effect: *The New Sounds: Lee Konitz and Stan Getz* (1951), *Lee Konitz: The New Sounds* (1951), *Miles Davis: The New Sounds* (1951), *New Sounds from Sweden, Vol. 1* (1951), *Bengt Hallberg, Lars Gullin: New Sounds from Sweden, Vol. 2* (1951), and *Red Rodney: The New Sounds* (1951). The idea of the “new” had been with Weinstock since he founded the label in 1949 under the name New Jazz. He changed it a year later to Prestige, a word that invoked a sense of uplift, achievement, and expertise.⁵

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⁵ The research in this chapter uses the record collection at the Institute of Jazz Studies (IJS), housed at the Newark campus of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. The IJS’s massive collection includes nearly 100,000 records, arranged by label issue number and recording format. The collection contains multiple versions of the same record, some of which differ dramatically in their visual design and layout. Traditional citation methods do not account for such differences,
Throughout jazz history, the idea of the modern, as Ingrid Monson argues, has served various social and artistic functions, especially in relation to how jazz musicians associated themselves with or distanced themselves from European musical values. In the early-1950s, the term “modern” worked on different aesthetic, political, and technological levels for Prestige. Musically, modern jazz musicians were innovators, pushing the boundaries of harmony, form, melody, and the possibilities of improvisation. Often referred to as “modernists,” these musicians appropriated ideals of universality, progress, and autonomous art as a strategy to free their music from genre constraints formulated around an essentialized understanding of black “vernacular,” “folk,” or “low” culture. As we shall see, Prestige also used “modern” to describe its adoption of long-play and its abilities to bring these musical trends to the ears of a diverse listenership. Prestige’s use of modern connected sound to politics, politics to technology, and technology to sound.

During the immediate postwar era, jazz was caught somewhere between “lowbrow” popular song and “highbrow” art music. The popularity of swing music in the previous decades had made jazz into a mainstream music, defined by a rising consumer culture and white middlebrow values. White bandleaders such as Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, and Artie Shaw became the nationally recognized face of jazz, generally assuming that one record with a catalog number (e.g., PRLP104) equals another. The research throughout the dissertation attempts to account for such differences and, as a result, I cite some of the same recordings multiple times but in their different iterations. Whenever possible, I have accessed the cited format in its original size and speed. Here, I read Prestige’s catalog by issue number rather than recording date as a means of understanding the company’s business approach at particular moments, a methodology that always points back to the archive.

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even though Count Basie, Chick Webb, Duke Ellington, and Fletcher Henderson (to name a few) were among the genre’s greatest pioneers. Following the end of World War II, bebop emerged from the backroom jam sessions in Harlem to provide a counter narrative. Bebop’s extreme tempos and perplexing chord structure required both technical virtuosity and an erudite understanding of melody, rhythm, form, and improvisational conventions. The public face of bebop, at least in its early years, was Dizzy Gillespie, who, along with a cohort of other young composers, pushed the musical boundaries through intricate chord substitutions and highly variable melodies with angular contours and frequent chromaticisms. Rhythm sections with piano, bass, and drums were still the norm, but their accompaniment became increasingly syncopated and rhythmically irregular.

These artists embraced “high art” musical values by pushing their performances into the concert halls and demanding that listeners sit down and pay attention. One of bebop’s major innovators, Charlie Parker, carried around Stravinsky scores and cited Bartók as an important influence. He would quote themes from operas and ballets during his solos both as a nod towards these influences and as a musical clue for those quick enough to hear the reference. Bebop pushed against the commercialization of jazz by creating an inside culture of highly virtuosic musicians and listeners. Some musicians, such as drummer Kenny Clark, even rejected the term “bebop” (or “bop”) because they believed the press manufactured the word to sell music. “We called ourselves modern,” he

once said.\(^9\) The jazz press in the mid-1940s used the term “modernists” to refer to bebop musicians and their proponents.\(^{10}\)

Constructions of race were an ever-present cultural force for these African American musicians as they attempted to justify and legitimate their music through European notions of genius and virtuosity. They adapted the universalist language of midcentury American modernism to prove their artistic value within a cultural industry that upheld the violent institutional structures of racism. As an unfortunate result, this discourse inherently de-emphasized jazz’s African American heritage and celebrated the music as an art form that transcended race, thereby allowing those with economic power to dismiss or continue to ignore the hardships of Jim Crow.\(^{11}\) More equitable possibilities in this regard opened up in the latter part of the decade as the civil rights movement gained momentum and jazz musicians found ways of expressing their cultural heritage through hard bop, soul jazz, and the New Thing.\(^{12}\) In the late-1940s and early-1950s,

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\(^9\) This quotation appears at the beginning of “We Called Ourselves Modern,” chapter 5 of Guthrie P. Ramsey, Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 96. Ramsey’s chapter usefully deals with the constructions of race and Afro-modernism in 1940s jazz.

\(^{10}\) For an overview of this terms and its relationship to bebop, see: Bernard Gendron, “‘Moldy Figs’ and Modernists: Jazz at War (1942–1946),” in Jazz among the Discourses, ed. Krin Gabbard (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995). For a detailed study of bebop’s musical and cultural genesis, see: DeVeaux, The Birth of Bebop.

\(^{11}\) In her overview of this period, Monson uses the phrase “colorblind modernism” to refer this attitude and approach towards racial politics. See: Monson, Freedom Sounds, 70.

\(^{12}\) In the first three chapters of Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t, Scott Saul details the parallels between these jazz subgenres and the fight for civil rights, particularly how musicians pushed back against this universalist notion of jazz. See: Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). Jazz’s emerging black aesthetic happened in parallel to other cultural trends and political victories, including Brown v. Board of Education (1954), which declared state-sanctioned segregation illegal, and the State Department’s decisions to use jazz in its Cold War propaganda efforts abroad (see chapter 3). Also see: Eric Porter, What Is
however, white musicians dominated the readers’ poll in *Down Beat* and *Metronome*, the most popular and widely circulating jazz magazines of the time.\(^{13}\)

When the first jazz LPs appeared on Prestige in 1951, the discursive terrain deemphasized the connections between jazz and black culture. Prestige’s use of “modern” in its titles and promotional ephemera connected technological innovation to musical experimentation through a narrative of newness that skirted issues of race. The label’s business practices and approach to record making positioned its music against mainstream consumer culture and what was seen as lowbrow popular song. The label’s catalog included a cross-section of jazz styles and a diverse roster of musicians, often in interracial configurations. Prestige’s first fifty LPs, issued 1951–52, featured a profusion of styles, from bebop and the blues-infused playing of saxophonists James Moody and Gene Ammons, to the cerebral experiments of Lennie Tristano and Lee Konitz. Other musicians that appeared on Prestige’s first LPs included Roy Eldridge, Stan Getz, J.J. Johnson, Fats Navarro, Zoot Sims, Sonny Stitt, Al Haig, George Wallington, Wardell Gray, Sonny Rollins, and Miles Davis. Under the direction of Weinstock, these LPs emphasized a “modern” sound and style, largely without reference to jazz’s black cultural roots.\(^{14}\) In doing so, Prestige celebrated its niche listeners and expert collectors.

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\(^{13}\) By a large margin, these same white musicians appeared more regularly on the covers of these periodicals than their black colleagues. More exact figures regarding these readers’ polls and magazine covers can be found in: Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 66–70.

\(^{14}\) This aspect of Prestige’s approach changed in the early-1960s as the label shifted its business model to reflect the popularity of hard bop and soul jazz. Weinstock also started several subsidiary labels that specifically focused on blues and folk music.
Recording for Prestige, Blue Note, and Columbia, Davis would become a central figure to 1950s jazz as his music and offstage persona became a unique blend of black hipness and cool detachment. This was not the case in the late-1940s and first few years of the 1950s, however. His relationship with composer Gil Evans and musicians Gerry Mulligan and Lee Konitz, for example, led to a series of influential recordings heavily influenced by the aesthetics of musical modernism. I analyze the genesis and music of the so-called “Birth of the Cool” nonet as well as Mulligan and Konitz’s connection to Prestige below, but here I point to how the ideals of jazz modernism surrounded the ensemble’s 1949 live radio broadcasts from New York City’s Royal Roost. The host of the show, “Symphony” Sid Torin announces the group to the radio audience using similar words that appear on Prestige’s front and back matter: “Right now ladies and gentleman, we bring you something new in modern music, we bring you impressions in modern music with the great Miles Davis and his wonderful new organization” (0:15). The group featured unusual orchestration and emphasized the arrangements over improvisation, presenting something different (and in fact new) compared to bebop, traditional jazz, or big band swing that made up jazz at the time. In this brief excerpt, Torin repeats the phrase “modern music,” elsewhere referring to the group’s music as “progressive jazz” and consistently emphasizing both its “new” and “modern” aspects. It is little surprise that one

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of the lasting legacies of this project is how it emerged from deep study of the classical scores of Ravel, Debussy, and Stravinsky.\textsuperscript{16}

Prestige’s treatment of Davis’s music operated within a rubric of jazz modernism that refused to equate jazz with black expressive culture, instead asking listeners to hear it as sophisticated music that ran against popular trends and only happened by to black. Yet even as companies like Prestige made jazz into a form of musical modernism, crossing the boundaries of high, middle, and low cultural aesthetics, the musicians were still confined by an industry that placed musicians at an enormous disadvantage because of the many forms of institutional racism under Jim Crow. Between 1948 and 1953, Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker, and Thelonious Monk all famously lost their New York City cabaret cards, which permitted them to perform in nightclubs, as a result of drug charges within a system that enabled police abuse against African Americans.\textsuperscript{17} Jazz clubs were still segregated and integrated bands on stage, or especially on film, were controversial.\textsuperscript{18} Though the number of independent jazz record labels was increasing, there were few black faces behind the mixing boards, in the control rooms, or sitting in executive chairs.

\textsuperscript{16} For more on the connections between modernism and Birth of the Cool in relation to race, see: Monson, Freedom Sounds, 80–84; and Saul, Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t, 55–60. For more on the music, the musicians, and the lasting cultural impact of the album see: Ted Gioia, The Birth (and Death) of the Cool (Golden, CO: Speck Press, 2009), 80–94; and Frank Tirro, The Birth of the Cool of Miles Davis and His Associates (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2009).


It was within this logic of jazz modernism that the mistaken ending of Davis’s “Bluing” first circulated. For Prestige, “modern” jazz was sophisticated, and sat in opposition to the popular songs regularly featured on jukeboxes and top-forty radio. New technologies of record making came to occupy a central place within the label’s cultural discourse. Davis’s voice had a decidedly modern presence: a modern mistake on modern records played by modern jazzmen and heard by modern listeners.

Theorizing Format

There is an infamous false start of “The Man I Love,” recorded at the end of 1954 by Miles Davis’s “Modern Jazz Giants” at Rudy Van Gelder’s studio in Hackensack, New Jersey. Only a few seconds into the first take of this Gershwin tune, Thelonious Monk interrupts the slow introduction of vibraphonist Milt Jackson to ask a question: “When am I supposed to come in, man?” Monk’s entrance brings the recording to an immediate halt and the rest of the band, apparently frazzled from an already long recording session, reacts with some unintelligible words of frustration. (One musician can be heard saying, “Man, the cat’s cuttin’ hisself.”) Monk replies without so much as a pause: “I wanna know when to come in, man. Can’t I stop too? Everybody else . . .” Davis then enters the conversation to address Van Gelder, “Shh . . . Shh . . . Hey Rudy, put this on the record—ALL of it.”

Davis’s comments display an acute awareness of the social space of the studio and the technicians behind the control board. But these are not the reasons why this outtake is so well known. Rather, it is a disagreement between Monk and Davis that has made this
session, as Monk biographer Robin Kelley puts it, “one of the most controversial in the history of jazz.” Kelley goes on to describe Monk’s various disagreements with Weinstock, Prestige, and Davis after he asked Monk to “lay out” (i.e., not play) behind all trumpet solos. Allegedly, Monk responded by purposefully sabotaging the session, which as legend has it, almost caused a fight between the two musicians. Historians often use this exchange on “The Man I Love” as evidence and documentation for the underlying tension between Miles and Monk that ran through the session.

My interest in this 1954 session is not in the biographical moment, but in the technological and social one. Initially this session produced four musical tracks that Prestige released in 1955 on two 10-inch LPs titled Miles Davis All Stars and Miles Davis All Stars, Vol. 2 (1955). The alternate take of “The Man I Love,” complete with the studio chatter and Davis’s comment to Van Gelder, first circulated in 1957 on a record titled Miles Davis And The Modern Jazz Giants. What made this record unusual was its recording format, an LP that spun at 16 2/3-rpm, half the speed of a typical 10- or 12-inch LP.

By recording format, I mean the mode of encoding sonic data onto a specific medium, such as an LP, CD, cassette tape, or MP3. Format includes specifications such as size, shape, material, and sonic properties of the medium as well as the visuals, graphics, and text of its container. In MP3: The Meaning of a Format, media theorist Jonathan Sterne...

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19 Kelley, Thelonious Monk, 182.
20 Ibid., 182–84 for full account.
21 Prestige released the alternative take of “The Man I Love” on a standard 12-inch LP in May 1959, as the last track of a record by the same name. Note that Kelley, in his account, mistakenly combines the 33 1/3 LP from 1959 (PRLP 7150) with the 16-rpm LP from 1957 (PRLP 16-3). Kelley, Thelonious Monk, 182.
argues that such attributes contain a range of assumptions, logics, and practices embedded within historically specific notions of technology and listening. Format, then, heavily influences the social and cultural transmission of audio content because it sets the parameters for storage, distribution, and consumption of sound.\footnote{Jonathan Sterne, \textit{MP3: The Meaning of a Format} (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 7.}

Technically, the LP era began in June 1948 when Columbia Records introduced their long-playing microgroove technology. For listeners in the late-1940s and early-1950s, however, it was unclear how and in what ways this technology would impact the production and consumption of music. As vinyl LPs came to replace the shellac discs of the previous recording era, record consumers faced numerous options in terms of format. Spinning at 33 1/3-rpm, there were 12-, 10-, and 7-inch LPs. At 45-rpm, there were 7-inch singles and extended play (EP) discs. Many record companies also continued to produce 12- and 10-inch 78-rpm discs well into the decade, along with other experiments like Prestige’s 16-rpm discs. By the late-1950s, the industry standardized so that most labels released music on either 12-inch 33 1/3-rpm albums or 7-inch 45-rpm singles. During this decade of transition, 1948–1958, both major and independent record labels had to adjust their infrastructures for recording, producing, and manufacturing based on a rapidly changing and uncertain market.

Recording companies before the LP era had experimented with recording beyond the time restrictions of the 78-rpm disc. To do this, labels would record a five- to six-minute piece and then split it into two parts, placing each half onto the A- and B-sides of a
10-inch 78-rpm disc. This is the case with Duke Ellington’s “Tiger Rag” (1929) and “Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue” (1938), Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey’s “Honey Suckle Rose” (1934), and Dexter Gordon’s “The Chase” (1947), a cutting session with fellow tenor saxophonist Wardell Grey. Other examples include Benny Goodman’s nearly nine minute “Sing, Sing, Sing” (1937), which took two sides of a 12-inch disc and Ellington’s four-sided work, “Reminiscing in Tempo” (1935). Record owner and producer Norman Granz was an early proponent of this technique. By recording his jam-session style Jazz at the Philharmonic (JATP) concert series, Granz became one of the first to release live concerts in three or four disc album sets. Such records represent only a small percentage of commercially released jazz of the 78-rpm era, yet they nevertheless demonstrate a desire to record extended jazz performances despite the technological limitations.

Consider Ellington’s “Tiger Rag” or Goodman’s “Sing, Sing, Sing” from the perspective of format. In their originally issued form, both were lengthy recordings split between sides of 10- and 12-inch 78-rpm records, respectively. The gap between sides, usually timed to coincide with a change in solos or compositional transition, functioned as an aural interruption where technological limitations sounded as silence. In the early-1950s, Brunswick and RCA Victor reissued these Ellington and Goodman tracks on LP as a

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23 At the time, 10-inch discs were generally reserved for popular music and jazz, while Western art music appeared on 12-inch 78-rpm discs.
continuous track without the aural break caused by the need to flip the record.\textsuperscript{25} The continuous play, according to \textit{New York Times} columnist John Wilson, made a large difference to listeners because it was now possible to hear the “smooth flow” of the performance.\textsuperscript{26} The LP, like other technologies of the time, allowed musical sounds to travel across time and space with increasing efficiency and efficacy, all while silencing itself in the process.

Wilson’s article also spoke to the “new horizons” that the LP opened for jazz, an enthusiasm tied directly to the changes in listening practices.\textsuperscript{27} As Leonard Bernstein noted on his 1956 LP, \textit{What is Jazz}: “The emphasis is on listening these days instead of on singing and dancing. This change had to happen. For one thing, the tremendous development of the recording industry has taught us to listen in a way we never did before.”\textsuperscript{28} Listening has never been a static activity, but one determined by the social conditions that surrounded the means of production, distribution, and consumption. Bernstein singles out technology as precipitating such changes while also connecting jazz

\textsuperscript{25} Though LPs still necessitated flipping the record, this action rarely interrupted a track in progress. For more on the cultural significance of the flip, see: Mark Katz, \textit{Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 77. Like the Ellington and Goodman tracks mentioned here, most of the first LPs in 1948–1951 were sets of reissued recordings packaged as artist retrospectives. At Columbia, this included: \textit{The Bessie Smith Story, Vol. 1, 2, 3, 4} (1951); \textit{The Bix Beiderbecke Story, Vol. 1, 2, 3} (1951); \textit{The Louis Armstrong Story, Vol. 1, 2, 3, 4} (1951); \textit{The Benny Goodman Combos} (1951); and \textit{Benny Goodman and His Orchestra} (1951).

\textsuperscript{26} Wilson was writing specifically about Woody Herman’s extended suite, “Summer Sequence,” though it is clear from context that he is speaking about the genre as a whole. Wilson, “Unbound Jazz,” XX22. Columbia issued “Summer Sequence” on two 78-rpm discs (four sides total) as a part of the Herman’s \textit{Sequence in Jazz} album (1949).

\textsuperscript{27} Wilson, “Unbound Jazz,” XX22.

\textsuperscript{28} Released in mid-October 1956, \textit{What is Jazz} was the first Columbia record to feature Davis after the trumpeter signed with the label at the end of 1955. His quintet’s recording of “Sweet Sue, Just You” illustrated small-group improvisation. Bernstein’s comments cited here appear on side 2.
to the stationary and introspective listening practices of Western art music.\textsuperscript{29} Listening was becoming more of an activity in and of itself, especially as it became easier to do in the privacy of one’s own home. The growth of the TV and record industry, in particular, gave consumers more options for consuming music. Such changes necessitated new equipment, however, which prompted listeners to re-situate themselves in relation to these objects of reproduction.\textsuperscript{30}

The changes in listening practices that occurred through the 1950s had a large impact on jazz audiences. Since a single LP side could hold multiple tracks without pause, producers began rethinking their content and programming. Columbia’s popular albums head George Avakian, who released the first LPs onto the market in 1948, looked towards other media to deal with the new challenges of organization. As he told Michael Jarrett many years later:

> The concept that I used in making a 10-in LP—a pop LP—was thinking of it as a radio program in which the entire package has a purpose. It’s programmed. You start with something that catches the attention of the listener on the outside first track. In fact, I did this deliberately on both sides. I’d try to find a real attention-grabber. Then I’d pace the program and end with something that makes the person want to turn the record over.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29} Gunther Schuller makes a similar point in his 1957 essay “The Future of Form in Jazz.” He writes that jazz was becoming “a music to be listened to” because of the music’s new experiments in harmony and form. Quoted in John Howland, “Ellington Uptown”: Duke Ellington, James P. Johnson, and the Birth of Concert Jazz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 168.

\textsuperscript{30} Television also developed in tandem with these recording technologies. For example, Bernstein’s What is Jazz was originally a TV broadcast that Columbia later released in LP form. Jonathan Sterne argues this point more generally in Sterne, MP3, 12. Also see: Tim Anderson, Making Easy Listening: material culture and postwar American recording (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 103–48; Keir Kightley, “’Turn It down!’ She Shrieked: Gender, Domestic Space, and High Fidelity, 1948-59,” Popular Music 15 no. 2 (1996), 149–77.

Avakian thought about the entire listening experience and tried to anticipate the things that would bring listeners back to the record store. Though he adopted radio programming as a model, he took the physical properties of the record into consideration. In his role as the mediator between artist and consumer—what Andrew Blake has describe as a “first listener”32—Avakian reoriented his role as producer in response to the new demands of the LP format. His comments also assume an audience that was listening across modes of distribution and across technologies of reproduction.

When Columbia introduced the 10- and 12-inch LP in 1948, the label anticipated continuing the same genre and format conventions used with 78s: 10-inch for popular and 12-inch for art music. The 1950s music industry treated jazz as popular music. So nearly all jazz issued from 1948–1954, with some exceptions on Columbia and Decca, was on 10-inch LPs, including those discs issued by Prestige.33 By the end of the decade production of 10-inch LPs—along with most other formats—had all but stopped, replaced by the 12-inch LP and 7-inch 45 single.

Prestige’s experiments reveal an industry in transition, where the 12-inch LP was simply one format among many. During this period, labels experimented with many different formats in hopes of finding the ones best suited to their customers and to the types of music they wanted to record. From 1951–1957, Prestige released jazz as 45 singles

33 The term “album” is another leftover from the 78-rpm era. Consumers would store their 78-rpm discs in books that resembled photo albums. Additionally, companies would sell thematically grouped records (like a box set) of longer classical works in prepackaged albums. The term continued to be used throughout the LP era and beyond.
and on extended play discs, 10-inch LPs and 78s, as well as 12-inch LPs that spun at both 33 1/3- and 16 2/3-rpm (hereafter 16-rpm). Davis’s voice, included as an attempt by Prestige to bring listeners into the spaces of musical creation, cuts across these various formats. Thinking through format places such moments in context of these shifting modes of representation.

The 16-rpm format had been adopted for spoken word recordings, or “talking books,” for the blind. With nearly twice the number of grooves per side, these discs had an even longer playing time than a standard 33 1/3-rpm LP. The small grooves decreased the playback fidelity and so the format was rarely used for music. Prestige only released six different 16-rpm discs, the first of which featured vibraphonist Milt Jackson in two different configurations. Jackson’s LP, Concorde (1957), included a logo announcing the novel format with a tagline: “more modern jazz at the modern speed.” In small italics on the back jacket was also the phrase, “16, which actually stands for 16 2/3-rpm, is the modern speed in phonograph records. The equivalent of two twelve inch 33 1/3-rpm recordings on one twelve inch disc is the result.” It was an experiment, modern in how Prestige sought to explore innovative ways of presenting jazz on record.

The extremely limited production run of Prestige’s 16-rpm discs marks a particular moment of commercial failure. Examined through format and placed in context of the 1950s industry, however, the discs reveal Prestige’s desire to successfully adapt to new technologies and emerging consumer demands. The longer long-playing record, for example, was a new mechanism for documentation. After all, Davis’s 16-rpm LP, Miles Davis And The Modern Jazz Giants (1957) includes alternate takes of “But Not For Me,”
“Bags’ Groove” and “The Man I Love,” the latter featuring the studio chatter between band members. Similar to the rhetoric used on Davis’s 1951 LP, *Blue Period*, the label’s emphasis on “modern” similarly glosses its musical aesthetic as well as its desire to experiment with the technological means of representation, particularly in how mistakes and alternate takes might give listeners different ways of accessing the music. Put another way, the failed formats from this period offer a prehistory of the industry’s standardization to the 12-inch LP. This matters not only because it helps contextualize the now-ubiquitous 12-inch, 33 1/3-rpm LP. It also points to an alternative history of jazz on vinyl that accounts for the dynamic nature of customers, manufacturers, and producers in the mid-century United States.\(^{34}\)

### 1951: The 10-inch LP, First Takes

On his 1951 recording of “East of the Sun,” Zoot Sims plays the melody a total of three times: once at the beginning, another at the end, and two non-consecutive halves in the middle. The quartet plays the thirty-six measure, ABAC form without deviation through the eleven-minute track, rendering an up-tempo yet still relaxed version of Brooks

Bowman’s 1936 song. The two melody halves that appear in the track’s middle are not by design, but the result of a few moments of confusion.

Sims plays a full iteration of the melody at the top, followed by solo choruses by each member of the quartet. Sims comes in again after the drum solo, improvising for a half-chorus and returning to the melody in the second half of the form (5:18). This leads to a seemingly natural ending point. He plays a clear cadential figure, and pianist Harry Biss and bassist Clyde Lombardi hit the tonic chord together as if to conclude (5:45). Drummer Art Blakey, however, plays through the ending without pause. Unlike Blakey’s continuation with Davis on “Bluing,” the rest of the band proceeds without so much as a skipped beat, though there is clearly confusion as Sims improvises around the melody for a half-chorus and clearly states the melody once again (6:05). At this point, the track is not yet half over—Sims plays two more solo choruses, trades 4s with Blakey for another two, and finally signals the out chorus through his return to the melody for the third time (10:15). To end, Sims repeats the same cadential figure and together the band concludes.

Through the two choruses of melodic confusion and a false ending, the band plays on the edge of a breakdown. The ensemble’s smooth excellence and execution makes this record feel loose, but not sloppy; their ability to make a mistake not feel like one is its own kind of virtuosity. Despite the uncertainty, they never hesitate or sound in danger of falling apart even though Sims’s broken melody was not business as usual in an early-1950s recording session. The jam-session quality of the performance can be heard elsewhere as well. Lombardi’s bass solo ends four bars too early and in the wrong part of the form, something quickly fixed by the rest of the ensemble. Sims’s inventive playing, his nearly
endless stream of ideas, gives the recording its life from start to finish, making the composite more than its imperfections.

“East of the Sun” resulted from Prestige’s first recording session meant to specifically take advantage of the long-playing technology. The August 14, 1951 date with Sims produced two tracks, “Zoot Swings the Blues” (over eight minutes) and “East of the Sun” (eleven minutes), which appeared on opposing sides of a 10-inch LP titled Swingin’ with Zoot Sims (1951). Prestige’s promotional materials appearing on other LPs informed potential buyers that the disc was a “special long record running 11:00 and 8:30 minutes recorded exclusively for this LP.” Additionally, the B-side label included the phrase “Uninterrupted Version recorded Exclusively for LP.” Record companies were not the only ones who had to be sold on the new technology—these marketing phrases announced the novelty of a “special” and “exclusive” listening experience. After all, these longer recordings represented a very small portion of the label’s output.

Over the next three weeks, Prestige did two more sessions with Gerry Mulligan and Miles Davis specifically for release on LP. The three sessions resulted in four LPs released in 1951 and 1952, including Davis’s “Bluing.” Another resulted in “Mulligan’s Too,” a seventeen-minute blues that took up two sides of a 10-inch LP titled Gerry Mulligan Blows (1952). The back jacket of Mulligan’s record similarly included the short phrase “Special LP recording” that advertised the label’s experimentation to potential buyers. Years later,

35 This phrase appears on the back jacket of Stan Getz, Vol. 2 (1951), Prestige’s fourth LP issued.  
36 The sessions occurred on August 14, August 27, and October 5, 1951 by Zoot Sims, Gerry Mulligan, and Miles Davis, respectively. These recordings appear on Miles Davis: The New Sounds (1951), Miles Davis Blue Period (1952), Gerry Mulligan Blows (1952), and Swingin’ with Zoot Sims (1951).
when asked about the first LP sessions, Weinstock specified his desire to have the musicians play longer solos in a relaxed environment:

I sensed that we were going to have LPs. I’d heard rumblings. And I did three sessions that were monumental. The first one was Miles Davis with Sonny Rollins and Jackie McLean. Art Blakey was on drums. I think it might have been Walter Bishop and Tommy Potter, but I’m not sure. Anyway, I just said, “Miles, we’re going to stretch out.”

He said, “You mean we’re just going to play?”

I said, “As long as you want almost—within reason.”

He said, “Okay, who should I use?”

I said, “You seem to love Sonny Rollins.” If you look at the early ones, Sonny’s on a lot of them. I said, “You love Sonny.”

He said, “What about this young guy Jackie McLean? He’s pretty good too, if we’re going to stretch out.”

I said, “Yeah, I heard him. He’s good.” If you listen, that session we did “Dig,” “Bluing.” Now Jackie doesn’t play on all the tunes. He wasn’t really that great at the time. He was good.

So Miles And Sonny stretched out. That’s how it went. We’d always talked about the personnel, what we’re going to do. A lot of times they’d have tunes. Other times, I’d have tunes. Our main emphasis was just to play and stretch out. We accomplished that there.37

Through this passage, Weinstock speaks about his desire to take advantage of the new technology and allow the musicians to “just play” and to “stretch out.” The format afforded new musical possibilities, yet those possibilities required musicians and producer to reorient their relationships to one another in the studio. These changing roles went beyond telling musicians to simply play longer, as Weinstock recalled about the Mulligan session:

On the Gerry thing I had him stretch out. He played a long solo, and then him and Allen Eager would play. They’d look at me, if I wanted them to play more. I’d shake

37 Jarrett, “Cutting Sides,” 331. The discographical details prove that Weinstock is correct regarding the personnel, though he misremembers Davis’s session as the first.
my head, “Yeah,” “no,” or whatever. Then they'd switch. I'd sort of “cut my throat.” He'd know he'd be going out at the end of the chorus.38

By discussing personnel, suggesting repertory, or signaling to the musicians while recording, Weinstock's comments point to the changing role of the producer. Musical creation in the coming years would increasingly occur in tandem with technological innovations such as multi-track recording, other kinds of signal processing, and the successful commercialization of stereo sound.39 Though the availability of those technologies were several years away in 1951, the LP was one of the first changes in the studio that enabled producers such as Weinstock to re-imagine the possibilities of jazz record making.40 Keeping various kinds of mistakes on record became one way that this experimentation manifested in sound.

Prestige's growth into a leading independent jazz label coincided with the industry-wide transition to the LP and a period of intense musical and technological change. After founding the label in 1949, Weinstock initially situated Prestige as a specialty label aimed at jazz listeners and collectors, a position that allowed for some flexibility in his business practices. In this way, he followed in the footsteps of other small labels such as Commodore Records, founded by Milt Gabler in 1938. Gabler's first industry job was at his

38 Ibid.
39 Commercial uses of stereophonic recording and playback began in the 1920s and 1930s. For instance, Disney’s film Fantasia (1940) famously used stereo playback in the theaters. The recording industry experimented with stereo in the twenties, though it was not until the fifties that labels began regularly recording in stereo. The first affordable stereo cartridges for LP players appeared in 1958, which helped stereophonic sound become a reality for consumer playback. See: Paul Théberge, Kyle Devine, and Tom Everett, eds., Living Stereo: Histories and Cultures of Multichannel Sound (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 1–36.
40 Magnetic tape and the accompanying technology of multi-tracking are other examples.
father's New York City radio shop. By the mid-1930s he had changed the business into a record store that specialized in jazz and eventually started offering records through mail order. He also became one of the first to successfully sell reissued recordings. No doubt encouraged by the many collectors who were its customers, Commodore became the first label to include complete musician credits on the recording itself. These practices became standard with larger firms such as RCA Victor and Columbia.

Weinstock, like Gabler, got his start selling records. As a teenager, Weinstock began a mail-order business by advertising in Records Changer, a hobby that eventually grew into a more substantial business. He rented space at the Jazz Record Center on 47th street in Manhattan and soon after began making records. Prestige, then called New Jazz, began in January 1949 with a recording session featuring pianist Lennie Tristano. Weinstock’s background as a collector as well as his label's position on the edges of popular music gave Prestige flexibility—it became an early adopter of the LP, issuing its first 10-inch discs in 1951. (The label expanded to 12-inch LPs in 1955.) Employing the strategy used by George Avakian during Columbia’s initial run of LPs in 1948, Weinstock filled his first LPs with reissued material from Prestige's back catalog. These discs had

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41 Commodore’s position as an independent label specializing in jazz allowed Gabler to experiment. For example, he recorded Billie Holiday’s “Strange Fruit” in 1939 after Columbia refused the project fearing the overt political theme. Holiday received a single session release from Columbia to record it. “Strange Fruit” appeared on the B-side, paired with “Fine and Mellow.” Both are considered canonical recordings today.
42 Label owners with a background in retail founded several other record labels, including Commodore, HRS, Savoy, Dial, and Vee-Jay.
43 For example, Prestige’s first LP, the 10-inch Lennie Tristano and Lee Konitz (1951), included six tracks recorded by Tristano and Konitz in 1949 at the label's first record session. For a full list of
three or four tracks per side, each lasting two-and-a-half to three minutes (the standard length for recordings in the 78-rpm era). This strategy enabled Prestige to offer music on both new and old technologies without having to invest in costly recording sessions that would not necessarily guarantee sales.

Along with being the first Prestige LP with a track above eight minutes, *Swingin’ with Zoot Sims* was also the first of the label's LPs to include liner notes on the back jacket. The sixteen LPs released before *Swingin’ with Zoot Sims* had either a blank back or a list of the label's catalog. These lists included track titles and personnel if space provided; recording dates and locations were generally not mentioned. Gitler’s first liner notes on *Swingin’ with Zoot Sims* highlight the insider culture of “modern” jazz musicians, who would gather after hours for jam sessions in “a studio on West 47th Street known as ‘Don Jose’s.’” He continues:

> Neither the musicians nor the small group of listeners who were usually in attendance had access to a tape recorder. We often regretted this inability to preserve the type of unhindered, swinging music we felt never was captured at recording dates.

> A recording session has undertones of tension running through it. The jazz artist faces the problem especially when he must undertake the bulk of the improvisation. Mistakes cannot be too large even though they are an expected and human occurrence when a man is attempting impromptu innovations. Then, there is the restriction of the time limit. First a tune is “run down for time.” One chorus is measured on a stop-clock and the soloist then knows how many choruses he may blow. Most 78 RPM records run from two and a half to three minutes. This


44 Weinstock reportedly asked Gitler sometime at the end of 1951 to write the liners. As Gitler recalled: “Not only was it the first time Prestige had put anything but a catalog or blank space on the back liner of an LP but it was the first time I had been published, other than the high school and college newspapers.” Ira Gitler, liner notes to *Swingin’ with Zoot Sims*, Zoot Sims, Prestige PRLP 117, LP (10in), 1951. Gitler eventually wrote hundreds of liner notes for Prestige.
striucture has always confronted the recording jazz artist, until August 14, 1951. On that afternoon, Jack “Zoot” Sims ambled into the Apex recording studios to do some sides. It was obvious from the moment Zoot started to play that he was in a relaxed mood and really wanted to blow. Immediately, much of the uneasiness created by the restrictions was nullified to a great extent.\(^{45}\)

From multiple perspectives, *Swingin’ with Zoot Sims* offered something new. Along with the longer playing time, the liner notes experimented with a multi-layered approach to presenting the music that combined audio and visual means of representation. The liner notes, advertisements, and other marginalia advertised the new music and technology in tandem. With this addition, the LP became an audio-visual medium.

Beyond their description of the circumstances surrounding the session, Gitler’s notes emphasized how the technology gave listeners access to musical performances that were, until this point, reserved for only a few. This connected to a historically specific discourse of jazz modernism that sold a new listening experience through technology, thereby giving access to new places and spaces of music making. Linking claims of “new” and “modern” music to technological innovation was a business strategy Prestige used throughout the early-1950s. Gitler’s liner notes to *Miles Davis: New Sounds*, for example, describe Davis’s music in terms of the new modes of technological representation. In particular, Gitler highlights the possibility of recording without time limits:

Of course, Miles is to be appreciated for bringing a new sound and conception to the trumpet but what really gives him greatness are the intangibles he possesses, which enable him to transmit sweeping joy with his “wailing” solos and reflective beauty in the delicacy of his ballads.

This album gives Miles more freedom than he has ever had on record for time limits were not strictly enforced. There is opportunity to build ideas into a definite

\(^{45}\) Ibid.
cumulative effect. These ideas sound much more like air-shots than studio recordings.

Upon the wonderful rhythmic foundation of Art Blakey’s drums, Tommy Potter’s bass, and Walter Bishop’s piano, tenorman Sonny Rollins and alto-man Jackie McClean are able to enjoy some of the unlimited time for their solo efforts. Rollins demonstrated the impact of the intangibles, again, with his solo on “Paper Moon.” . . . Here are New Sounds at greater length. Listen to them at great length.46

The technology, as Gitler narrates it, provides an opportunity for a more immediate listening experience, one closer to hearing the musicians in live performance. Gitler’s liner notes to Davis’s Blue Period LP similarly foreground the connection between modern technology and modern listening: “This album is a must to those who appreciate our modern jazzmen. I know that the people who have missed hearing the musicians in person will be especially gratified, because this is what they have been missing.”47 As with other early LPs on Prestige, the term “modern” reads as both musical and technological. Capturing such musical freedom through a process at once artistic and technological, then, enables a new kind of listening. Technology is vital to such claims since the longer playing time seemingly connects listeners to the musical source in ways impossible with previous formats.

46 Ira Gitler, liner notes to Miles Davis: The New Sounds, Prestige PRLP 124, LP (10in), 1951. Other writers, such as Bob Rolontz at Billboard, made similar parallels between LP reproduction and jazz on stage. He writes: “Instead of waxing the men on three-minute selections which used to be standard on 78’s, the artists will take one tune and stay with it for the entire length of the LP disk. This allows the musicians to play as tho they were at a regular live performance, instead of being held back by arbitrary record limitations.” Bob Rolontz, “Jazz LP’s and EP’s Become Disk Industry’s Solid Staple,” Billboard, 5 June 1954, 46.
47 Gitler, liner notes to Miles Davis: Blue Period.
Sims’s mistakes on “East of Sun” represent the new possibilities of recording, producing, and listening brought about by the jazz LP. Hearing jazz in process through musical mistakes created the illusion of intimacy, though it did so through an ever-present form of technological mediation. More generally, this discourse reveals how the notion of what a jazz record was—or what it could be—was in the process of changing as a result of the LP format. In the next few years, disc size, visual design, liner notes, and other elements of producing records would rapidly change. However, in 1951 and 1952 when Prestige issued the LPs of Davis, Mulligan, and Sims, LPs were still new and roughly three times as expensive as their 78-rpm counterparts. Their future with consumers and within the industry remained unclear. During these years of uncertainty, musical mistakes began appearing on record with more frequency. In 1961, Davis explained the importance of such mistakes to critic Ralph Gleason: “When they make records with all the mistakes in, as well as the rest, then they’ll really make jazz records. If the mistakes aren’t there too, it ain’t none of you.”

1953: Extended Play

The label’s experimentation with variations of the LP format offers a glimpse into the creative business practices that characterized the 1950s record industry. During the transition from 78s to LPs, the visual, physical, and sonic attributes of jazz records

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48 This quote is found in: Jack K. Chambers, Milestones (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 236. For the original comments see: Ralph J. Gleason, liner notes to In Person Friday And Saturday Nights At The Blackhawk, San Francisco, Miles Davis, Columbia C2S 820, LP (12in), 1961.
changed dramatically as record labels adjusted their infrastructures for recording, producing, and manufacturing.\textsuperscript{49} This trial and error characterized this shift and, in some cases, caused customer confusion. The most well-known example is the so-called “war of the speeds” between Columbia and RCA Victor, 1948–1951. After Columbia introduced the LP in 1948, RCA Victor refused to adopt the 33 1/3-rpm playback method and, instead, introduced its own 45-rpm format a year later. Hoping to gain control of the market, RCA designed their discs—commonly known as 45s—to be incompatible with Columbia’s 33 1/3-rpm system. Though made out of the same vinyl material, 45s had a larger hole, rotated at a different speed, and were only seven inches in diameter. With enough space for about four minutes per side, the small discs were ideally suited for pop singles and quickly found their way into jukeboxes all over the country. RCA’s refusal to adopt 33 1/3 LPs and Columbia’s counter-refusal to adopt 45s caused an industry-wide decrease in sales because consumers did not know which new format and equipment would last. RCA eventually gave in and issued their first LPs in January 1950, causing Columbia to begin producing 45s about a year later.

The resolution between RCA and Columbia had significant consequences for smaller, independent labels like Prestige, since it now enabled the company to invest in both formats with some assurance that its investment would generate sales. It was not a coincidence that both Prestige and Blue Note issued their first LPs at this time. Still,\textsuperscript{49} here I draw on Sterne, \textit{MP3}. He writes: “All formats presuppose particular formations of infrastructure with their own codes, protocols, limits, and affordances. Although those models may not remain constant, aspects of the old infrastructural context may persist in the shape and stylization of the format long after they are needed” (15).
customer preferences for jazz remained unclear. Wanting to give listeners as many
options as possible, Weinstock strategically issued the same content across a variety of
formats that differed in size, material, and rotation speed. In 1951, when Prestige issued its
first 10-inch LPs, the label offered most of its catalog on 45-rpm singles and 78-rpm discs
as well. By 1953, the label began producing 7-inch “extended play” (EP) discs, a variation
on the standard 45 single. Due to narrower grooves compared to the regular 45, EPs held
nearly twice the music per side (around seven-and-half minutes) although at the expense
of sound quality. The EP, after its introduction by RCA Victor in 1952, gained some
commercial traction with independent jazz labels, including Clef, Savoy, Contemporary,
Mercury, Debut, and Prestige. Clef, a small label founded by impresario Norman Granz,
issued several recordings from its Jazz at the Philharmonic concert series in 1953,
becoming one of the first labels to release jazz on this format. The major labels—
Columbia, MGM, Decca and Capitol—released pop and crossover EPs but did not use the
format for jazz specifically besides the occasional discs featuring crossover stars such as
Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby.

50 Noting the growth of industry-wide profits in 1953, Billboard Magazine writer Bob Rolontz cited
EPs as an important part of the growth of jazz sales. Bob Rolontz, “Jazz LP’s and EP’s Become Disk
51 No author. “EP’s move into jazz, classic, polka fields,” 5 September 1953, Billboard, 13. Much later,
Weinstock cited Granz’s approach to JATP as an influence: “John Hammond was my first hero in
terms of producers. I loved Alfred Lion because of what he did with Sidney Bechet and then with
Monk. I like Norman Granz; the live JATP things were very innovative.” Bob Porter, liner notes to
labels such as Atlantic and Blue Note eventually released a few EPs, though not until the late-1950s
when the EP gained traction with R&B audiences. See: Jim Dawson and Steve Propes, 45: The

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Prestige began issuing EPs in 1953 and eventually released a total of seventy-four records in its PREP 1300 series.\textsuperscript{53} Like its first LPs, Prestige used the EP to repackage and reissue recordings already in its catalog. Most EPs included a total of four tracks, two per side. Lengthier tracks were split between the A- and B-sides, utilizing the same practice from the 78-rpm era when technological limitations necessitated a break in sound to include the entire recording. This was how Prestige released “Bluing” on an EP titled \textit{In a Blue Mood: Bluing} (ca.1954).\textsuperscript{54} The label used the same approach with Davis’s recordings of “Walkin’” and “Blue ‘n’ Boogie,” both recorded on April 29, 1954 and issued on EP as \textit{Walking} (ca. 1954) and \textit{Blue ‘n’ Boogie} (ca. 1954) by the Miles Davis All Stars. According to the back jackets, the discs cost $1.58 each.

As he would do later with the 16-rpm discs, Weinstock attempted to use the EP format as an alternative means of documenting and presenting his label’s music. The simple two-toned graphics and marginalia on the EPs were similar to the first 10-inch LPs, but with one important difference: each EP prominently displayed the recording session date on both the front and back jacket of the record. \textit{Miles Davis Quartet: May 19, 1953} (1953) for example, included the recording date in its title, displayed in block letters in the top right corner of the jacket. The back covers did not have liner notes but, instead, featured a list of discs in the series along with relevant data such as artist roster, track

\textsuperscript{53} My date, 1953, is an educated guess since release dates were not widely publicized. Prestige’s first thirty EPs were all recorded in the first half of 1953 or before. The label recorded the first disc in the series—by vocalist Annie Ross—on October 9, 1952 and released on 78\textsuperscript{54} on January 24, 1953 issue of \textit{Billboard}.

\textsuperscript{54} The label issued “Bluing” on three 78-rpm sides under the title \textit{Miles Davis and His Band} (1952).
name, and recording date. The majority of these EPs displayed “Prestige Extended Play Documentary Series” somewhere on the cover (usually on the top right corner) and a tag line of “Each album represents an individual record session” on the back. The first few discs had a short paragraph on the back jacket that explained the purpose of the series:

PRESTIGE presents jazz for the modern collector on extended play. This series represents the best in modern music from 1949 up to today. Each album is an individual record session in itself, with actual dates of the recordings inscribed on the cover. This series will be invaluable to all students and fans of jazz as it will give them an accurate, documented, chronological picture of both the jazz scene as a whole and the important musicians as individuals, beginning with 1949 and continuing on as each new year brings new developments in jazz.

It was not standard practice in 1953 for record companies to name specific session dates on the record. This “documentary series” claimed to give access to the most “modern” music while simultaneously allowing listeners to track jazz’s trajectory over time. With the phrase “actual dates inscribed on the cover,” the label marked the record jacket as a future location for such documentation while also emphasizing the need to preserve and chronicle the music’s development. Prestige’s historical self-consciousness was likely a symptom of Weinstock’s background as a collector and his efforts to direct the label’s catalog towards a listenership of jazz insiders similarly invested in this history. The 45-rpm documentary series was Weinstock’s attempt at creating a collectable jazz archive.

55 EPs issued later in the series included only artist and track name, presumably to conserve space and list more recordings.
56 This quote appears on the back matter on Bennie Green with Strings (1953). Later records in the series replaced this text with the tag line mentioned above.
57 Collectors, however, had been documenting such information for years. See: Bruce Epperson, More Important than the Music: A History of Jazz Discography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
In the changing landscape of the early-1950s jazz industry, many formats like the 7-inch EP and 10-inch LP had a relatively short lifespan. More formats failed than succeeded. Examining such failures unearths a history of record making that accounts for the creative business practices necessary to succeed in the highly competitive record industry. With a market in flux, record labels strove to balance their production and manufacturing costs with customer preferences. With the EP Documentary Series, Prestige explored how new formats could meet new demands for jazz on record. The transition to the LP changed the relationship between music making and recording technology, something reflected in the seemingly insignificant elements in the marginalia. If “modern” listening was partially about hearing jazz as it happened, all aspects of the record needed to help construct this feeling of musical immediacy. As the label did with its liner notes, Prestige’s EPs pushed towards a mode of record making that used the physical, visual, and aural elements of the record together. Failed formats, in other words, have the potential to reveal the dynamic nature of how customers, manufactures, and producers adopted and found new uses for emerging technologies of sound.

1955: The 12-inch LP

The piano intro to “Disappointed,” a track on James Moody’s Hi Fi Party (1956), includes some extra accompaniment from the musicians in the studio as they talk, laugh, and joke while the tape is rolling. The loose, social atmosphere continues into the solos of saxophonist Pee Wee More, trombonist William Shepherd, and trumpeter Dave Burns. Though mostly unintelligible, the voices can be heard throughout the entire six-minute
and twenty-second track. At the beginning of his solo, Bruns enters with a forceful double-time phrase and one of the musicians shouts “Whoa!” During James Moody’s solo, several others react: “swing it” (2:35)—“nice!” (2:52)—“go ahead” (3:00)—“yeah” (3:33). Vocalist Eddie Jefferson begins his solo with a reference to Charlie “Bird” Parker, who had passed away about five months before the August 1955 record session: “Here’s Bird—here’s what Bird said. [Starts singing] I got in trouble foolin’ around with a pretty woman” (3:45). His solo continues, precisely replicating the melodic content of Parker’s 1946 rendition of “Lady Be Good,” but with the addition of Jefferson’s newly composed lyrics.58

Weinstock later explained that he based “Disappointed” on a concept of “long-term airplay” he heard on Norman Granz’s Jazz at the Philharmonic (JATP) recordings. Weinstock liked that “you could hear the musicians talking.”59 The Parker recording of “Lady Be Good” that inspired Jefferson’s lyrics is a good example. Recorded in January 1946 at the Philharmonic Auditorium in Los Angeles, this JATP recording begins with a piano solo and a brief exchange. One of the musicians can be heard asking, “What’s this?” and someone else responds with “Lady be Good.”60 In his liner notes, Gitler explicitly connects Moody’s disc with Parker’s JATP performance and draws attention to the studio informality: “The boys in the band shout encouragement to the soloists who are Pee Wee More, Shepherd, Burns, and Moody. Then Eddie Jefferson comes in with Bird’s solo from

59 Porter, liner notes to The Prestige Records Story, 47.
60 Granz issued this recording on Jazz at the Philharmonic: Lady Be Good, Part 1&2 (1948), a 12-inch 78-rpm record.
JATP and turns it into an amusing sad story.” Earlier in the notes, Gitler writes about the social interactions heard on record:

The happy vitality that was in evidence in Diz’ band, with Moody and Milt Jackson foot racing from the Down Beat awning to the corner of 52nd & 6th, or the saxophone quintet blowing uproariously between sets in the club’s upstairs, is here in essence if not actuality. We called this set Hi Fi Party because everyone had such a ball making it. The prime example of this is Disappointed where the “Silence On the Air” goes unobserved.61

This passage accentuates how the specific relationships of the musicians translate into moments of informal music making caught on record. Gitler attempts to bring the listener “inside” the music through his descriptions of the sociality among band members, a sentiment accentuated by the disregard for the business-as-usual approach to recording in the studio. Pointing to Jefferson’s adoption of Parker’s JATP solo similarly lifts a veil of insider music culture, educating listeners even while also pointing to the dialogical processes of jazz improvisation and record making.62

Hi Fi Party was one of the first 12-inch LPs released by Prestige. The label began using the format in 1955, a decision that was in line with the general direction of the industry. Elsewhere, Gitler felt the need to explain how the company would use the larger format. His notes to an earlier record, Milt Jackson Quartet (1955), address the 12-inch format specifically:

It seems that sometimes 10 inch LPs do not suffice. When a musician is an important one (in the sense of having something to say) lovers of the jazz art

61 Ira Gitler, liner notes to Hi Fi Party, James Moody, Prestige PRLP 7011, LP (12in), 1956.
62 Interacting with recordings has been a vital component of jazz musicians’ education throughout the music’s history. See: Paul Berliner, Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 70, 96, 108, 780.
cannot get enough of him [sic]. The 12 inch LP is the logical solution, that is until everyone can get a Rek-O-Kut turntable.

Prestige will utilize the 12 inch series in two ways. One will be to bring up to date the best work of the important musicians recorded at the company's inception: Stan Getz, Lee Konitz, Miles Davis, and Gerry Mulligan. Remastering will be done by Rudy Van Gelder who will bring the sound up to 1955 standards. Each of these albums will contain significant recordings of the aforementioned musicians. The space afforded by the 12 inch LP will be used to present a collection of numerous short tracks (i.e., the 3 minutes recordings), and in the cases of Mulligan and Davis, the longer sides as well.

In new recordings for the 12 inch series, although the short track will not be completely neglected, the main emphasis is on ample time for development of ideas by the soloist and composer. As in the case of the reissues the musicians are important ones—people who are contributing richly to the story of jazz.

*Milt Jackson Quartet* was the third 12-inch LP issued by Prestige in the label's PRLP 7000 series. On it, Gitler glosses Prestige's history with different formats, from the 78-rpm sessions to the “longer sides” of Davis and Mulligan—a reference to the label's first recordings for the 10-inch LP format. He also highlights the importance of sound quality through the remastering work of Rudy Van Gelder, a point emphasized on the back of several other early 12-inch LPs. This emphasis on audio fidelity—also seen in the title of *Hi Fi Party*—serves a documentary function as well, bringing previously issued recordings on Prestige’s roster to the 12-inch LP. This connects to a similar sentiment found on the EP documentary series that Prestige experimented with in the years before. By

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63 Ira Gitler, liner notes to *Milt Jackson Quartet*, Milt Jackson, Prestige PRLP 7003, LP (12in), 1955.
64 Prestige's second 12-inch LP, *Stan Getz Quartets* (1955), included a list of the label's first ten 12-inch discs, five of which have an asterisk next to their name and a note: “Reissues, remastered by Van Gelder.” Prestige began regularly employing recording engineer Rudy Van Gelder during this period and rethought its manufacturing process. Critic Nat Hentoff wrote about Prestige's new commitment to sound quality in an August 1954 review for *Down Beat*, noting the “better material” used in the label's pressings. “Believe me,” he observed, “the difference is enjoyably noticeable.” Nat Hentoff, “Miles Davis: Prestige 182,” in *The Miles Davis Reader*, ed. Frank Alkyer, Ed Enright, and Jason Koransky (New York: Hal Leonard Books, 2007), 194.
emphasizing the “ample time for development,” Gitler also echoes his own notes from the first 10-inch LPs of Mulligan, Davis, and Sims, which discuss the unrestricted ability to record beyond the limits of the 78-rpm record. Moody’s *Hi Fi Party*, as Prestige’s eleventh 12-inch LP ever issued, serves as an example of this record making approach adapted to the larger format.

The adoption and standardization of 12-inch LPs made Prestige rethink its overall presentation in other ways as well. Nearly all of Prestige’s record jackets began to feature longer liner notes that educated consumers about the music and new technologies or detailed the label’s own history. Even the record sleeves, once simply a blank piece of paper, became an alternative place for advertising. The label’s cover art also became increasingly sophisticated, detailed, and creative. The augmented emphasis on visual design occurred in tandem with new approaches to record production intended to take advantage of the “long-playing” aspect of the technology.

This transition did not happen overnight. Prestige treated its early 10-inch LPs much like 78-rpm records, which were generally sold in blank paper sleeves and had only simple lettering on the label itself that indicated artist, song title, record company, and issue number. Prestige’s first LPs included only the leader’s name in block letters, a list of tracks, and issue number. Consider the unadorned cover of *James Moody Favorites Volume One* (1952) that displays the album and track names in dark blue, block lettering with the

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Prestige logo beneath (Figure 3). The top left and right corners, respectively, included the issue number, “PRLP 110,” and the phrase “Long Playing Micro Groove Non-Breakable Record,” a marketing slogan developed by Columbia in 1948. The back jacket was dark brown and blank, much like the typical sleeve of a 78-rpm disc. This approach was partly pragmatic since the costs of printing ornate graphics would increase the price of discs that were already more expensive than their 78-rpm counterparts.

Figure 3. Album cover, James Moody Favorites Volume One (1951).

Figure 4. Album cover, Swingin’ with Zoot Sims (1951).
Sometime during the first few years of the 1950s, Prestige began to place a simple, two-toned image of the bandleader on its covers (Figure 4). In 1976, Gitler recalled Weinstock’s preference for such design during this time: “I can still visualize the front cover [of Swingin’ with Zoot Sims (1951) a photograph of Zoot blowing his tenor saxophone printed in blue on yellow paper. That was Prestige’s version of a two-color job but Weinstock’s attitude was: ‘They don’t buy it for the cover, man. If they dig the music . . .’”66 By the mid-1950s, Weinstock’s stripped-down approach—his feeling that listeners “don’t buy it for the cover”—began to change. More complicated graphics began appearing after 1956 when Prestige hired designers Don Martin, Tom Hannan, Gil Mellé, Reid Miles, and pop-artist Andy Warhol. The photos and often abstract artwork of Esmond Edwards and Don Schlitten also regularly began appearing on record jackets during this time.67 Notable examples include Sonny Rollins’s Saxophone Colossus (1957) and Tenor Madness (1956), Miles Davis’s Walkin’ (1957) and Relaxin’ with the Miles Davis Quintet (1958), and John Coltrane’s debut album, Coltrane (1957) (Figures 5–7).

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66 Ellipsis in original. Ira Gitler, liner notes to Zootcase, Zoot Sims, Prestige PR 24061, LP (12in), 1976.
Figure 5. Album cover, *Relaxin’ with the Miles Davis Quintet* (1958).

Figure 6. Album cover, *Coltrane* (1957).

Figure 7. Album cover, *Walkin’* (1957).
Prestige’s change in visual approach coincided with the rapid growth of the record industry as a whole. By the mid-1950s, record companies were selling more discs and making greater profits than at any time in their history. According to the *New York Times*, from 1947 to 1957 industry-wide sales increased from $203 to $360 million and unit sales of LPs from 1954 to 1956 rose from 11.1 to 33.5 million (Table 1). This resulted in a significant increase in percentage of industry sales for the LP: from 30% in 1953 to 61% in 1957. In contrast, sales of 78s had all but disappeared and by 1958, the predominant format of the previous era accounted for only 1.2% of the industry’s total sales (Table 2). As the LP gained market strength, the sales of record players increased as well. During a similar time period, sales figures of high fidelity equipment increased from $12 million in 1950 to $200 million in 1957 while units sold jumped from 3.1 million in 1955 to 4.98 million in 1957.68

Table 1: Total LPs Sold, according to the *New York Times*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Units sold, in millions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The new focus on visual design brought Prestige closer to another leading independent label, Blue Note Records. Founded in 1939 by Alfred Lion and Max Marguilis, Blue Note also targeted the niche listenership of jazz collectors through its initial focus on traditional jazz styles. The label shifted its approach in 1947 when it first signed forward thinking bebop musicians such as Thelonious Monk, Art Blakey, and Bud Powell. In the 1950s, Blue Note became the largest proponent of hard bop, a sub-style closely associated with black popular culture and which drew from R&B, gospel, and blues music. Its roster during this time featured young musicians on their first or second record deals—first time leaders on Blue Note include Horace Silver, Lou Donaldson, Clifford Brown, and Wynton Kelly. Similar to Weinstock’s approach at Prestige, Lion felt that jazz should not be, as he said in a 1956 interview with Nat Hentoff, produced “like ball point pens” and that the music was “not the kind of commodity you can market in every candy store.” In the

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1940s, Blue Note made the unusual decision to release jazz on 12-inch 78s, a format generally reserved for art music. Lion explained his feelings that “jazz often could not be constrained to fit 10 [inches].” It comes a little surprise, then, that Blue Note became an early adopter of the LP, issuing its first 10-inch records in 1951.

Unlike Prestige’s gradual concern for visual design, Blue Note emphasized the appearance of its LPs from the beginning. Under the direction of photographer and co-owner Francis Wolff, Blue Note became one of the first labels to use photos and artwork on its records, despite the accompanying financial burden. Its 10-inch LPs were often two or three toned like Prestige, but featured eye-popping graphics. Several Miles Davis records recorded for Blue Note in 1953 and 1954 feature a picture of the trumpeter overlaid with abstract cross strokes of splattered ink. Even Blue Note’s first LPs, issued in 1951, included much more elaborate graphics on the covers. Compare Prestige’s *James Moody Favorites Volume One* cited above to *James Moody and His Modernists* released by Blue Note in 1951 (Figure 8). Blue Note’s LPs includes detailed artwork, intricate design, and various fonts that put this album cover in sharp contest to Prestige’s text-only approach. In 1955, both Prestige and Blue Note began using 12-inch LPs as their standard format, a decision that broke away from the genre conventions used during the previous recording era.

\[\text{Ibid., n.}\]
\[\text{Blue Note records sold for $1.50 per disc, a high price at the time. Lion strategized that collectors and other specialty listeners would pay a premium price for such records.}\]
Figure 8. Album cover, *James Moody and His Modernists* (1951).

Even as Prestige came closer to its competitors in terms of graphic design on the 12-inch discs, the label maintained its distinctive sound based around an open, jam session-like production style. Prestige’s loose production would come to define the label through the 1950s, as Weinstock recalled:

> We had a basic framework, and we’d discuss who we were going to use. I didn’t try and shove people down their throat, and they didn’t try and shove ’em down my throat. Same with the material. I’d have suggestions. They’d have suggestions. My knowledge of songs was tremendous. I’d say, “Hey Trane, you know ‘Russian Lullaby’?”

> “Sure man”

> Boom. “Russian Lullaby,” just like that.\(^{72}\) He could teach it to everybody on the session. It was all very loose. I hated charts. I hated arrangements. That’s where me and Alfred [Lion, of Blue Note Records] differed. Alfred would have rehearsals. I never had a rehearsal. I didn’t believe in it. I believed jazz had to swing and be loose. It had to be mutual. You couldn’t tell those giants—and they were greats—what to do.\(^{73}\)

Weinstock felt that minimal preparation, with little to no rehearsal, helped foster a creative environment in the recording studio. As we have already seen with Davis’s

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\(^{72}\) “Russian Lullaby” is on Coltrane’s *Soul Trane* (1958).

\(^{73}\) Jarrett, “Cutting Sides,” 329.
“Bluing,” Sims’s “East of the Sun,” and Moody’s “Disappointed,” the inclusion of musical mistakes, studio chatter, and other elements of informal music making had been present in the labels’ early experiments with the LP. As the company transitioned to the 12-inch LP, the aural sense of the music being created in the moment became a regular part of Prestige’s business.

Consider Relaxin’ with the Miles Davis Quintet, recorded in 1956 and issued two years later. Davis’s raspy voice opens the record as he communicates with those in the control room: “I’ll play it and tell you what it is later” (0:00). He counts off the rhythm section with four measures of high-hat like snaps that continue through Red Garland’s piano introduction based on the melody of Westminster Quarters. Similar moments of informality occur on “You’re My Everything,” which includes a false start. An unaccompanied, descending scale by Davis begins this track. He stops to call the tune and jokes with the musicians, “When you see a red light on, everybody’s supposed to be quiet” (0:06). After a short back and forth with Van Gelder, Garland plays a melodic introduction that Davis soon interrupts with a whistle and then some instructions: “Play some block chords, Red.” After a brief pause, they continue. “All right, Rudy? Block chords, Red” (0:28). The group runs down the track without further trouble. Like Prestige had done with Zoot Sims, the loose production aesthetic draws attention to the group’s virtuosity through effortless execution.

Relaxin’ was one of four LPs that featured Davis’s quintet with saxophonist John Coltrane, pianist Red Garland, bassist Paul Chambers, and drummer Philly Joe Jones. After the 1955 Newport Jazz Festival, Davis signed a lucrative contract with Columbia Records.
In order to fulfill his remaining contract with Prestige, Davis’s quintet did two marathon-like recording sessions on May 11 and October 26, 1956 that produced enough material for a set of LPs titled *Cookin’, Relaxin’, Workin’,* and *Steamin’ with the Miles Davis Quintet.* Prestige released the albums over the next four years, thereby taking advantage of Davis’s continued late-1950s success with Columbia.74

The high-level performance alone makes this set of recordings noteworthy. Equally significant, however, are the comparisons to live performance that these records engender, a correlation encouraged by Gitler’s liner notes. “Although this session was recorded in a studio,” writes Gitler on *Relaxin’,* “the tunes were done in the immediate succession of a nightclub-type set and there were no second takes.”75 He goes on to describe the starts, stops, and chatter between musicians and engineer as adding to the “personal” feeling of the recording:

There is a false start on You’re My Everything and you will hear Miles’ instructions to Red Garland before the complete performance of the tune. In other instances on this record, Miles addresses the group, exchanges communications with engineer Rudy Van Gelder, jokes with Bob Weinstock, etc. These comments make this recording a bit more personal and you are thereish.76

Similar moments occur on the other records in this set. On “Trane’s Blues” from *Workin’,* Davis can be heard saying “blues” at the start of the track. There is a brief moment on *Cookin’* at the end of “When Lights Are Low” when Davis quietly marks the end of the track: “Okay . . . All right. Okay” (13:00).

75 Ira Gitler, liner notes to *Relaxin’ with the Miles Davis Quintet,* Miles Davis, Prestige PRLP 7129, LP (12in), 1958.
76 Ibid.
These moments of informality on record appear during a time when record labels like Prestige were rethinking the possibilities of the studio and the purpose of jazz recording. Record production was an essential component of this process, though the records themselves focused the attention elsewhere, especially to the bandstand. The notes to *Cookin’*, for example, attempt to break the phantasmic gap between musical creation and listening ears at home with a stereo. Gitler writes:

> It was during one of [Davis’s] stays at the Greenwich Village Jazz Center that these recordings were taped. In the two studio sessions that were made in that period, Miles called tunes just as he would for any number of typical sets at a club like [Cafe] Bohemia. There were no second takes.77

Mentioning the Cafe Bohemia both evokes a sense of place while also making reference to several live recordings from the club issued in 1955 or 1956 on Blue Note, Debut, Riverside, and Progressives labels (see chapter 4). Gitler’s emphasis on first takes—of the music being made once and only once—promises a concert-like listening experience. In his review of the record for *Down Beat*, Ralph Gleason similarly makes connections between the music and spontaneous expression: “All the tremendous cohesion, the wild, driving swing, and the all-out excitement and controlled emotion” of the group has “been captured on this record.”78

If such moments of social and musical interaction made these records into something that resembled a live performance, as Gleason and Gitler suggest, then they

77 Ira Gitler, liner notes to *Cookin’ with the Miles Davis Quintet*, Miles Davis, Prestige PRLP 7094, LP (12in), 1956.

also reveal one of the ways that black jazz musicians were increasingly finding new forms of agency in the mid-1950s. Musicians had always exerted power over the bandstand. However, bringing listeners into the studio in this way displayed Davis’s authority over the recording session. When he says, “I’ll play it and tell you what it is later” at the beginning of Relaxin’, Davis was not giving a request but a command. His interruption of Garland’s piano introduction gives an immediate payoff—listeners are able to hear Davis’s clear artistic vision in process. These moments of sociality have political import, no doubt bolstered by circumstances surrounding the sessions. After all, the loose production and marathon-like sessions resulted directly from Davis’s decision to leave Prestige for Columbia Records. Davis’s stock was rising and he knew it.

Like all other companies, Prestige settled on the 12-inch LP as their primary format. Yet, this outcome was not determined from the beginning, but the result of several years of trial and error as the label experimented with different disc sizes and rotation speeds. To a consumer audience listening to Cookin’ in 1957 or Relaxin’ 1958, a 12-inch record with a visually appealing design, lengthy liner notes, and studio chatter was relatively new. Moments of aural informality found on Moody’s “Disappointed” or the causal studio conversations of Davis’s “If I Were a Bell” must be understood in relation to these shifting modes of representation and production. By giving access to the spaces of music making typically kept private, these moments pushed the boundaries of what constituted musical performance on record and imagined a new era for the jazz album. They emerged from a period of media in transition, sonic reminders of how jazz production during this time was constantly in flux.
**1951 (Reprise): “Bluing” at the Margins of Music**

Tension runs throughout Davis’s 1951 recording of “Bluing.” Davis’s soloing style, for example, simultaneously points in opposite temporal directions: his double-time, bebop-inspired lines recall his best playing in the 1940s as a sideman with Charlie Parker; his economic usage of melodic fragments foreshadows his late-1950s style. The extended solo space allows Davis to deftly use the meandering tempo to his advantage, playing with, on top of, doubling up on, and stretching the time. Blakey’s steadfast pulse continues underneath without pause. Similarly, Sonny Rollins’s sound is always on the verge of splitting apart and often does, a symptom of a mechanical problem with his reed, mouthpiece, or combination of the two. Despite these issues, his style—part blues, part bebop—reveals his enormous potential. When Blakey begins a double-time feel partway through Rollins’s solo, the saxophonist quickly follows, traversing the range of his instrument through constant sixteenth-note lines (5:25). Bassist Tommy Potter and pianist Walter Bishop Jr. stay in the original groove, setting up a playful, yet uneasy juxtaposition between double and single time. After a return to the original tempo during altoist Jack McLean’s solo, the same double-yet-single-time feel comes back for Davis’s second solo (8:50). Several times during his last two choruses, Davis sounds as if he is trying to signal a return to the original tempo, yet nothing changes—a breakdown ensues.

The not quite double, not quite original time is an abstract metaphor for early-1950s jazz. Bebop’s rise and its as-of-yet unfulfilled promise of modern respectability put jazz musicians between high art and popular music. This noncommittal existence, we now
know, would produce the styles known as cool jazz and hard bop. Both musics gained buzzword status by the end of the decade, though in 1951 the future was uncertain. The term “hi fidelity” was not in widespread use. Stereophonic sound on commercial records was still a few years off. Many companies adopted the LP between 1951 and 1953, but the uncertainty caused by Columbia and RCA Victor’s “war of the speeds” was still fresh. This left the industry caught somewhere between 78, 45, and 33 1/3 revolutions per minute. The industry’s technological uncertainty made it possible to hear a musical breakdown not as a mistake, but as a novel moment caught on record. This moment was the result of creative rather than sloppy music making and production.

Weinstock’s decision to keep Davis’s voice on record was also a sign of things to come, as the trumpeter’s raspy vocals would appear on various recordings in the following years. Unlike the moments on Relaxin’ and “The Man I Love,” however, Davis’s voice on “Bluing” is hard to distinguish with certainty. Words and phrases like “ending” and “you know that” and “man” and “right?” are discernible but the exact way that everything fits together escapes transcription. Even as his words evade complete understanding, his voice replaces an expected sense of musical resolution. The moment speaks volumes for the changing relationship between jazz and technology, between musical performance in the studio, and the everyday performance lives of musicians. Its detachment from exactness and the capacity to leave a striking impression with seemingly little effort is also unabashedly cool.

The idea of “cool” is an elusive concept. As Phil Ford and Scott Saul explain in detail, conceptions of cool ran through US culture during the years after WWII when the rise of a
countercultural intellectualism, or white hipness, intersected with a form of blackness that resisted the structures of everyday racism. The cool aesthetic was rooted in black culture. For Ralph Ellison, cool was a protective veil on segregated busses and a psychological “bullet proof vest” for blacks in the South. He writes about how keeping a “cool eye” was a “life-preserving discipline” and how “coolness” was a survival strategy used to endure the daily violence of Jim Crow. Amiri Baraka writes about cool as a social tactic to deal with “the horror the world might daily propose” and as the ability to “make failure as secret a phenomenon as possible” through calm detachment. Like the word “swing,” Baraka astutely points to the tension between cool as a “social philosophy” (as described above) and the commercial brand of jazz born in the early-1950s. To him, cool jazz was a “tepid new popular music of the white middle-brow middle class,” a musical style that represented everything “cool” stood against. Cool, like “swing” before, traversed from verb to noun—from social philosophy to mass commercial category—along a historical trajectory of white (mis)appropriation of black expression.

Davis emerges as a key figure in 1950s cool, even though the word as an aesthetic and social strategy did not start or end with him. Still, he brought cool to a generation of jazz musicians. Jazz critic Gary Giddins explains:

Though Davis rejected cool jazz, he came to personify jazz cool. Miles looked cool, dressed cool, and talked cool—in a guttural, foul-mouthed sort of way. His posture was cool as he approached the mike or turned away from it. His notes were cool: fat voice-like plums sustained in a siege of meditation or serrated arpeggios ripped into infinity. Cool, too, were his rests, those stirring oases enacted with flashing eyes and shrugged shoulders. Miles was an ongoing musical drama. . . . Miles was an idiom unto himself.

Miles’s cool persona was born of the 1950s, though it would have done little to explain the twenty-five year old trumpeter in 1951. At that time, Miles was still trying to find his way, held down by a heroin addiction that he would eventually rid himself of in 1954. He did not yet have a major record deal or the money for fancy sports cars as he would at the end of the decade. In 1951, he had not yet injured his vocal chords that made his voice into the now-iconic raspy whisper that epitomized his personal aesthetic. His voice on Blue Period only hinted at this future trajectory.

The jazz recording industry’s trial and error with format is an overlooked part of this construction. In Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t, Saul points to how the “appeal” of Davis was


“clearly tied to the way he both courted respectability (those elegant suits, the lush bachelor-pad collaborations with Gil Evans) and flouted it by turning his back to the audience in more ways than one.”\textsuperscript{84} The collaboration with Evans mentioned here began with \textit{Miles Ahead} (1956), Davis’s second album for Columbia that featured his trumpet backed by a large ensemble. While Davis’s playing and Evans’s arrangements have rightfully received the majority of critical and scholarly attention, credit also must be given to producer George Avakian who signed Davis to Columbia in 1955 with the idea of making the trumpeter into a mainstream star (as he also did with Dave Brubeck). Avakian initially went to Davis with the idea of a large ensemble featuring the music of Gunther Schuller, whose music Avakian had already featured on \textit{Music for Brass} (1957) with Davis as a key soloist. Davis liked the idea but suggested Evans instead.\textsuperscript{85}

\textit{Miles Ahead} is also known for the ensuing disagreement over the album’s cover. When Avakian issued the 12-inch LP in 1956, on the cover he placed a stylish white woman sailing in the ocean, an image that communicated the sophistication of jazz within upper-middle class white sensibilities. As the story goes, Davis demanded Avakian change the cover by asking the producer, “Why’d you put that white bitch on there?”\textsuperscript{86} Later versions of the LP replaced the woman with a close-up of Davis mid-performance, his open eyes are focused somewhere above the camera. Placed within context of the wide-scale adoption of

\textsuperscript{84} Saul, \textit{Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t}, 31.
\textsuperscript{85} Avakian went on to produce \textit{Modern Jazz Concert} (1958), another album that featured Schuller’s music along side other so-called “third stream” projects that attempted to mix jazz and art music.
\textsuperscript{86} Quoted in Giddins, \textit{Visions of Jazz}, 347. Davis’s quote widely circulates, though there is no original source. Like so many other Davis stories, this confrontation with Avakian is likely part myth and part reality.
the 12-inch LP around this time, 1955–1956, and the growing emphasis on the LP as an audiovisual medium, this change in imagery speaks to how musicians were increasingly aware of the accompanying politics behind such modes of representation. Davis’s agency here also signals the changing roles of black cultural producers—it is doubtful that Davis could have made such a demand in 1951 when “they don’t buy it for the cover” was still Weinstock’s mentality at Prestige. When Columbia issued *Miles Ahead*, the balance between jazz art and commerce was much more open for discussion.

In the liner notes, Avakian make it clear that another Davis and Evans collaboration from 1949, the nonet now known as the Birth of the Cool band, directly inspired their approach to *Miles Ahead*. Avakian writes, “The present album represents, in a way, a summation of the development inaugurated by that original [nine-piece] Davis band.”

When Columbia issued *Miles Ahead* in 1956, however, the “birth of the cool” moniker had not yet been invented, though the band’s recordings had circulated in several ways since the group first recorded for Capitol in 1949 and 1950. In fact, the word “cool” never appears in the text on *Miles Ahead*.

The circulation of the nonet’s recordings sits at a nexus of commercial enterprise, recording format, and racial politics of 1950s jazz. Like *Miles Ahead*, Davis’s nonet was the result of interracial collaboration that mixed art and jazz genres. Among several others, the Modern Jazz Quartet’s John Lewis, West coast saxophonist Gerry Mulligan, and Evans

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87 He continues: “When Miles Davis signed with Columbia, we found in each other a mutual interest in furthering the ideals of the nine piece band.” George Avakian, liner notes to *Miles Ahead*, Miles Davis, Columbia CL 1041, LP (12in), 1957.
were all key players in the nonet’s creation and musical direction. The group made its debut on a WMCA radio broadcast from the Royal Roost, opening for Count Basie on two different dates in September 1948. Eventually, the nonet signed a short-term deal with Capitol Records and recorded twelve sides during three different recording dates in 1949 and 1950.

The 78-rpm format determined the parameters for these recordings. Capitol issued eight tracks on 78-rpm in the late-1940s and again in 1954 on a 10-inch LP titled *Classics in Jazz: Miles Davis*. The “Birth of the Cool” title did not appear until 1957 when Capitol reissued the recordings as a 12-inch LP by that title. The movement from 78-rpm to 10-inch LP to 12-inch LP occurred at a time when cool jazz had emerged as a significant commercial category. Capitol’s 1957 LP featured a black and white close-up of Davis playing his trumpet, wearing a pair of sunglasses even through the photos is clearly taken indoors. Against the black and white scheme, the word “cool” stands out in a bright red. The photo credits happen to belong to Aram Avakian, the brother of Columbia producer George Avakian.

The ensemble matched a pair of saxophones and four brass, including a French horn and tuba, with a full rhythm section. As a black musician fronting an interracial group, Davis’s leadership cut across the racial divide typical to the late-1940s music industry.

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88 Gunther Schuller, who would coin the term “third stream music” to describe such a mixture of jazz and Western art music, appears as the groups French hornist on four of the twelve tracks recorded for Capitol.

89 The 12-inch LP included eleven of the original twelve tracks recorded by the nonet. All of the recordings, including air checks from their group’s radio performance were released on *The Complete Birth of the Cool*, a 1998 CD. The 78s, all issued in 1949, paired these recordings together: Move/Budo, Jeru/Godchild, Boplicity/Israel, Venus de Milo/Darn That Dream.
Even so, some musicians criticized Davis for hiring white musicians, especially saxophonist Lee Konitz. In response, Davis told Nat Hentoff in 1956, “Music has no color. It’s a raceless art.” In this way, Davis responded in typical modernist language held over from the previous decade. This point of view, as Ingrid Monson argues, understood music to be the universal equalizer yet did so by relying on a high-art mentality that understood jazz as a mode of expression that transcended race.

The music itself balanced loose improvisation with strict arrangement and a swinging rhythm section with intricate orchestration. Scott Saul provides the standard reading of the nonet’s music. The ensemble, he writes,

emphasized interplay of soloists and background and gave them a fairly rigorous time limit. Only a few tracks, like the Lewis-arranged “Budo,” allowed their soloists to stretch out over the typical bebop rhythm section of piano, bass, and drums. More commonly solos were short—often less than a chorus—and were set in counterpoint to the chords being blocked out by some combination of trumpet, trombone, French horn, tuba, and alto and baritone sax.

All of this is true. Yet it also mistakenly interprets the formal strictures using the logic of a post-LP world. The limitations of the 78-rpm format meant that all twelve studio tracks

90 Quoted in Monson, Freedom Sounds, 82. The original Down Beat article dates from 22 August 1956.
91 Ibid. For more on the relationship of jazz to European linage see Ford, Dig: Sound and Music in Hip Culture, 57–59. Compare such comments to Davis’s 1969 interview with Rolling Stone where he said, “I was supposed to be on Steve Allen’s show, and I sent him a telegram telling him he was too white, his secretary was too white, his audience was too white. ... See, whatever they do, they’re trying to get those middle-aged white bitches to watch it.” Later he addresses interracial ensemble and highlights racial difference: “But Jimi Hendrix can take two white guys and make them play their asses off. You got to have a mixed group—one has one thing, and the other has another. For me, a group has to be mixed. To get swing, you have to have some black guys in there.” Don Demicheal, “Miles Davis: The Rolling Stone Interview Jazz’s Picasso Puts It in Black and White,” Rollins Stone, 13 December 1969.
92 Saul, Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t, 59.
are below 3:25. This is not the case on the live recordings taken from the band’s performance at the Royal Roost.⁹³ There are five overlapping tracks between the live and studio tracks, all of which are longer in their live versions. The live recordings of “Godchild,” for example, include an extra solo chorus for Davis and two added solo choruses by Mulligan and Konitz. All solos are played in what Saul describes as the “typical bebop rhythm section” (solo instrument accompanied by piano, bass, and drums). The two live recordings of “Move” include several extra solo choruses in this bebop rhythm section style.⁹⁴ Davis’s solo on the two live incarnation of “Budo” is twice as long as the studio version and one live version includes a solo chorus of Konitz and Mulligan simultaneously improvising that does not appear on the studio session.⁹⁵ In each of these examples, the arranged material remains the same only augmented by longer solos. With more room for improvisation, the live performances range from 3:40 to 5:51, all longer than the time limits of the 78-rpm discs. This suggests that part of the economy in form, especially regarding solos, was due to technological limitations rather than musical decisions alone. Simply put, the nonet’s music was not arranged or initially recorded with the long-playing technology in mind.

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⁹³ These recording appear on The Complete Birth of the Cool, a CD issued in 1998.
⁹⁴ One of the recordings also has a chorus of Davis trading four bar segments with drums. “Trading 4s,” as this is known, was a common occurrence in jam sessions and on longer recordings from the 1950s (e.g., Sims’s “East of the Sun” includes two choruses of trading 4s). “Budo” also includes Konitz and Mulligan trading for a chorus.
⁹⁵ Of the two other overlapping songs, “Mood Dreams” is the exact same arrangement, yet played slower in its live version. The studio version of “Darn that Dream” is one and half choruses total, while the live version is a full two choruses.
Because format influences the recording, presentation, and circulation of the music, it plays a key role in the cultural uses and understandings of that music. With the Davis nonet, the release history reveals how the 78-rpm set the conditions of possibility in the studio and the LP affected its association with cool jazz in the year after. This history points to how the notion of cool and the commercial marketing of the concept manifested through various formats and their associated cultural schema. Like the 1957 LP release of Birth of the Cool, Davis’s Miles Ahead emerged during a time when musicians were becoming increasingly aware of how their music circulated aurally and visually. Where Avakian imagined Davis speaking to culture of a stylish middle class, Davis resisted such iconography even as he embraced certain elements of its musical approach. This struggle over cultural positioning ran parallel to the industry’s adoption of the 12-inch LP as its standard format. Davis used his cultural cache to impose his authority over aspects of the record making process.

In comparison, Davis’s first two LPs on Prestige, The New Sounds and Blue Period, exemplify how African American musical practices translate into the logic of jazz modernism common to the early-1950s. Both records resulted from a single October 1951 recording session that produced seven tracks split between two 10-inch LPs. Weinstock organized Blue Period around a theme. Each of three tracks referenced the “blue” in the disc’s title: “Out of the Blue,” “Bluing,” and “Blue Room.” Gitler’s notes primarily focus on long-playing technology, but he also describes the “modern blues chord changes” of

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“Bluing” in language that only obliquely refers to the 12-measure harmonic structure that directly descends from African American musical practices. In the notes to Davis’s New Sounds, Gitler similarly writes:

Of course, Miles is to be appreciated for bringing a new sound and conception to the trumpet but what really gives him greatness are the intangibles he possesses, which enable him to transmit sweeping joy with his “wailing” solos and reflective beauty in the delicacy of his ballads.

In this passage, Gitler both relies on a trope of African American virtuosity that is non-quantifiable—what Adam Green and others have referred to as “naturalized genius”—while also eschewing race through his focus on Davis's “new” sound. Despite the underlying reference to African American musical practices, including the emphasis on the blues in the title, Gitler presents Davis’s music as an activity of making modern music through the use of modern technology.

Davis’s voice was there, too, made possible by the technological advancement of the long-playing record. This voice would reappear as the label’s music moved onto different sized discs, rotating at 78-, 45-, 33 1/3-, and 16 2/3-rpm. In doing so, it echoes through the decade from the “modern” sounds of “Bluing” through the future versions of Davis’s

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97 Consider these two books with “blues” in the title, both of which directs address black music and culture: Baraka, Blues People; Negro Music in White America; Albert Murray, Stomping the Blues (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976).
98 Ira Gitler, liner notes to The New Sounds, Miles Davis, Prestige PRLP 124, LP (10in), 1951.
persona, which morphed to fit an increasing emphasis on black artistic expression. Format was a key element in this transition.

**Head Out**

The contemporary image of a vinyl record is that of a 12-inch black disc, spinning at 33 1/3 revolutions per minute. Though these discs—along with the 45 single—dominated the industry for several decades after the 1950s, there were many LP variations that came and went at small independent record companies such as Prestige experimented with different disc sizes and rotation speeds. Though few had lasting impact, these short-lived formats can tell us a great deal about the changing relationships between music making and its mode of circulation. Prestige’s use of the 10-inch LP attempted to take advantage of the new capabilities of LP technology through the inclusion of musical mistakes. The label’s “documentary” EP 45 series placed recording dates in the marginalia in order to help listeners construct a history of musical development. A sense of history in the making was a valued part of the label’s story and marketing strategy. The eventual move to 12-inch record saw the final blossoming of how the aural and visual elements could work together, creating a look and sound that would come to define Prestige, and jazz more generally, in the years to come.

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100 For more on Davis at the end of the 1950s, see: Farah Jasmine and Salim Washington, *Clawing at the Limits of Cool: Miles Davis, John Coltrane and the Greatest Jazz Collaboration Ever* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2008), 109-15, 251-58. Prestige, too, reacted to this musical and cultural trend as Weinstock replaced the rhetoric of “modern” with the styles of hard bop and soul jazz, two related sub-genres inspired by black popular culture. I take up the subject of hard bop and soul jazz in chapter 4.
Davis’s musical maturation in the mid-1950s ran parallel to Prestige’s trials with different formats. His music continued to define the Prestige sound as the label moved to 12-inch LPs after 1955. Although Davis left for Columbia around this time, four of the first twenty-five 12-inch LPs were under the leadership of Davis while a fifth featured the trumpeter on six of twelve tracks.\(^{101}\) By the time Prestige issued their 100th 12-inch LP in 1958, the label had released nine Davis records, a remarkable percentage considering the trumpeter had been recording exclusively for Columbia since 1956. Prestige’s overall output was changing, as many of their most prominent musicians signed deals with other labels. Davis had moved to Columbia, Monk to Riverside, Hank Mobley to Blue Note, Milt Jackson and the Modern Jazz Quartet to Atlantic, and Sonny Rollins free-lanced with Blue Note, Riverside, and Contemporary. Weinstock responded by signing John Coltrane, Mose Allison, Paul Quinichette, and Frank Wess; these artists would help define Prestige in the coming years. It kept the loose production and jam-session-style recording dates, especially those featuring saxophonist Gene Ammons.\(^{102}\) Like Moody’s “Disappointed,” and Davis’s Relaxin’, many of Prestige’s 12-inch records used a socially informal production style that included spoken interactions between musicians.

Reflecting on the legacy of Prestige in 1992, Bob Weinstock wrote that “just as experimentation and improvisation is the essence of jazz, it is also the essence of running

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101 This list includes: The Musings of Miles (1955), Dig (1956), Miles (1956), Miles Davis and Horns (1956), and Conception (1956).
102 There are four LPs in particular that create a jam-session-like environment: The Happy Blues (1956), Jammin’ with Gene (1956), Funky (1957), Jammin’ in Hi Fi with Gene Ammons (1957).
a label.”

Weinstock’s own experimentations during the 1950s took place at all levels of Prestige’s business, from the musicians he selected and the tunes they played, to their chosen recording equipment and format. As so-called modern music became increasingly wedded to its reproductive technology, creative business practices insured a sustainable future. The genealogy of how mistakes in the studio sounded on record reveal the variety of ways that Prestige navigated a time of considerable change in jazz history. Thinking through format gives insight into how iconic moments on record are a product of music and marketplace, musical creation and record production. Davis certainly had an understanding of this when he joked with his fellow musicians, “When you see a red light on, everybody’s supposed to be quiet.” Thankfully, Davis refused to take his own advice.

**Chapter 1 Discography: Early LPs and Experiments with Format**

*Jazz at the Philharmonic: Lady Be Good, Parts 1&2.* Mercury 11075. 78 (12in). 1948.

*Norman Granz’ Jazz at the Philharmonic, Volume 8.* Mercury 11000, 11001, 11002. 78 (10in). 1948.


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———. Miles Davis: Blue Period. Prestige PRLP 140. LP (10in). 1952.


———. *Cookin' with the Miles Davis Quintet*. Prestige PRLP 7094. LP (12in). 1956.


———. *Steamin’ with the Miles Davis Quintet*. Prestige PRLP 7200. LP (12in). 1961.


Chapter 2

Quest for the Moment:
The Audio Production of *Ellington at Newport*

The opening moments of Duke Ellington’s 1956 LP, *Ellington at Newport*, announce not only the band on stage, but also the Newport Jazz Festival on record. It was the first time a major label had attempted to record the outdoor festival and was a difficult undertaking given the technology available at the time. The record begins with an introduction by impresario Father Norman O’Connor and then a few words by Ellington:

O'Connor (0:00): Good evening ladies and gentlemen. [Applause.] As you well know, one of the outstanding names in the field of jazz is that of Duke Ellington. And the group of men that are with him are all musicians that are considered among the best and certainly when working together under the direction and the very wonderful inspiration of Duke Ellington, one of the most capable groups in the field of jazz at the present moment. [Cheers.] I'm going to turn it over to the Duke and let him kind of introduce because he does it very facilely and very easily. So it's Duke Ellington. [Applause.]

Ellington (0:36): Thank you very much Father O'Connor. [Applause.] We have prepared a new thing. And, of course, it’s come especially for the Newport Jazz Festival and so we'll call the, uh, first part of it, “Festival Junction.” Jimmy Hamilton will state the theme. [Solo clarinet begins.]
Festival director George Wein had commissioned Ellington to compose a three-part suite for that year’s festival, the performance of which was to be recorded and subsequently released as a special edition LP produced by George Avakian.

Though Columbia’s initial purpose was to record Ellington’s *Festival Suite*, the label happened to be on hand to document what writer and critic Stanley Dance describes as “unquestionably one of the greatest individual triumphs in the entire history of jazz.”

After an underprepared performance of the suite, Ellington called “Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue,” a two-part piece joined by a solo from saxophonist Paul Gonsalves. During Gonsalves’s improvisation, the crowd went wild when one of Newport’s society women, Elaine Anderson, began exuberantly dancing in the aisle. Twenty-seven choruses later, Gonsalves ended to a boisterous crowd, so enthusiastic that festival director George Wein, fearing a riot, nearly ended the show. Ellington soothed the crowd by calling a feature for saxophonist Johnny Hodges and the band continued to play into the early hours of the morning.

The 1956 performance at Newport, as the story goes, revitalized Ellington’s career, which had been faltering in prior years. Early rock-and-roll had brought smaller audiences, shrinking recording contracts, and less overall public interest in jazz. The electric performance at Newport became the subject of a cover story in *Time* magazine.

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and the resultant LP, *Ellington at Newport*, quickly rose up the jazz charts.² Purporting to give listeners access to a triumphant moment of a jazz icon, the LP became the composer’s greatest-selling record and an oft-invoked aspect of the Ellington mythology.³ In the many years after, Ellington was reportedly fond of saying, “I was born in Newport 1956.”⁴

In celebration of Ellington’s 100th birthday in 1999, Sony-Columbia’s reissue label, Legacy, re-released *Ellington at Newport* as a double CD that boasted 100 minutes of previously unreleased and digitally remastered music from the 1956 Newport concert, in addition to extended liner notes by reissue producer Phil Schaap.⁵ Besides issuing the concert in its entirety and in performance order, Schaap created a stereo recording by combining two mono tapes from the original Columbia masters and a broadcast of the concert from the Voice of America (VOA), the official international broadcast institution of the US federal government.⁶ The composite recording offered Gonsalves’s famous twenty-seven chorus solo in far greater fidelity, since in 1956 Gonsalves had mistakenly

² The January 9, 1957 issue of *Down Beat* ranked *Ellington at Newport* as number two on the jazz charts: “Jazz Best Sellers,” *Down Beat*, 9 January 1957, 20. The LP remained a top-five bestseller for the rest of the year, with the exception of April, where it ranked number eight. For more specific details, see Figure 1 in the introduction of this dissertation.


⁵ Legacy retitled this disc *Ellington at Newport (Complete).*

⁶ Since the musicians were unpaid for the VOA broadcasts, the musicians’ union bared those tapes from commercial use. Columbia negotiated the use of the tapes with the Library of Congress who held the rights in 1999.
played into the wrong microphone. More than an LP-to-CD conversion, the 1999 CD re-imagined Ellington’s most mythologized moment on record through its production.\footnote{This chapter reworks my article on the same topic that situates the 1999 CD reissue and the 1956 LP within their respective cultural moments. I argue that the two versions of \textit{Ellington at Newport} required expert technical skills and creativity behind the recording console and should be understood as different cultural artifacts. See: Darren Mueller, “Quest for the Moment: The Audio Production of Ellington at Newport,” \textit{Jazz Perspectives} 8, no. 1 (2014).}

\textit{Ellington at Newport (Complete)}, as the CD was titled, sparked controversy within jazz circles because it revealed how the original LP was not solely “Recorded in Performance on July 7, 1956,” as the LP jacket states, but rather a hybrid creation. Using newly available production techniques, producer George Avakian had inserted audience noise and studio overdubs onto the Newport tapes after the fact. The CD version of the festival concert reveals how Avakian restructured and condensed the tapes from Newport in order to create Father O’Connor’s introduction that opened the 1956 LP. O’Connor’s preamble from Newport was, as the transcription below shows, much longer and from a different part of the concert entirely (the bold text represents material kept by Avakian):

\textit{O’Connor (0:00): Good evening ladies and gentlemen … [0:53] As you well know, those of you who have been around jazz for a little while and even those who are a little new at this thing, one of the outstanding names is that of Duke Ellington. I hate to say how long he’s been in the business, but it hasn’t been too long really, has it Duke? ([Ellington off mike:] Not too long, Father.) And the group of men that are with him are all a bunch and a wonderful group of individual musicians that are considered among the best in the field of jazz and certainly when working together under the direction and the very wonderful inspiration of Duke Ellington, one of the most capable groups in the field of jazz at the present moment. I think you know some of them, I’ll run down real quick like … [3:04] I’m going to turn it over to the Duke and let him kind of introduce because he does it very facilely and very easily. So it’s Duke Ellington. [Applause.]}

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Ellington (3:21): Thank you very much Father O’Connor. Ladies and Gentlemen our first selection brings Cat Anderson, Quentin Jackson, and Russell Procope to the microphone. One of our oldest, “The Black and Tan Fantasy.” [Piano begins.]

The Ellington at Newport LP highlights the multiple perspectives that jazz musicians, industry professionals, and other jazz listeners have concerning audio production. Avakian’s work in post-production brings up several fundamental questions that concern jazz history at large: How do records represent performance? What place does sound processing and record production have in such representations? What musical elements affect the technical decisions behind the record console? How have philosophies of record making changed over time? The discrepancies between the two versions of Ellington at Newport reveal historically specific ideas of what constitutes jazz on record.

This chapter uses Ellington at Newport to unravel the complex set of philosophies regarding sound reproduction of live events that came about as a result of the LP’s introduction. Here, I argue that the details of production and post-production are one means of understanding how musicians and large commercial record firms worked together to create jazz albums during this era. First, I provide an overview of George Avakian’s personal history and approach to recording jazz at Columbia during the 1950s. After then offering a theoretical framework in which to understand live jazz records, I specify several techniques Avakian used to produce Ellington at Newport. Next, I use

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8 Ellington, Newport (Complete), disc 1, track 2. O’Connor’s introduction cited here came from the beginning of Ellington’s set and, thus, temporally removed from the performance of the suite. The rest of the material heard on the opening track of the LP—beginning with Ellington’s statement, “We have prepared a new thing”—can be heard on CD disc 1, track 8, beginning at 0:12.
several unpublished documents from Avakian’s private archives to analyze the production of Gonsalves’s solo, which is the LPs most famous moment and, in some ways, its most mediated. Finally, I re-examine Avakian’s overall production methods and his attempts to simulate the experience of a live jazz concert for 1950s consumers. I situate those techniques of mediation within their cultural moment in order to lay the groundwork for understanding the wider stakes of audio production choices.

**George Avakian, Columbia Records, and Jazz Respectability**

As the LP grew in popularity and became the industry’s standard format, live jazz records proliferated. The commercial production of live records resulted from several factors and it was not the inevitable outcome. Record companies had to invest their time into recording on-location and then determine the artistic and financial value of that effort. In making live recordings part of their everyday business practice, these companies had to ensure that they had the right personnel to effectively and efficiently record, edit, and master recordings into a product that would attract potential buyers. The rise of the live jazz LP, in this view, resulted from the intersection of technological innovation and expertise of individuals on the bandstand, behind the recording console, and in the front offices of record labels.

Columbia employee George Avakian was a key player in the LP’s adoption for jazz. Having grown up in New York City, Avakian was introduced to jazz through radio broadcasts as a teenager. This passion continued to grow at Yale University where he
befriended a graduate student named Marshall Stearns and his group of jazz enthusiasts. In 1939, while still a student, Avakian pitched Decca Records the idea of producing a 78-rpm album of jazz in the same format used for art music: several discs organized around a theme (or group of pieces) and accompanied by lengthy, well-researched liner notes. Chicago Jazz, as it was eventually titled, became the first jazz album. A year later, he began working for Columbia as the producer for their Hot Jazz Classics series, which reissued out-of-print records of iconic musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith, and Duke Ellington. This series was the first of its kind on a major label.

The year of the LP’s introduction, 1948, was a big one for Avakian as well. Along with teaching one of the first university courses about jazz at New York University (NYU), he also worked with Walter Schaap—Phil Schaap’s father—to translate and expand Charles Delaunay’s Hot Discography for US audiences. That same year, Columbia appointed Avakian head of the international recordings and popular albums. In this role, he oversaw the first 100 popular albums issued on LP.

In 1950, Avakian issued Benny Goodman’s The Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert, one of earliest commercial LPs of a live jazz concert and the first jazz album to sell over a million copies. Albert Marx, husband of Goodman’s vocalist Helen Ward,

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9 As a staunch advocate for jazz and its musicians, Stearns founded the Institute of Jazz Studies in 1952. Throughout this decade he published articles about the music in many prominent periodicals with a white middle-class readership. His 1956 monograph, The Story of Jazz, published by Oxford University Press, was one of the first scholarly books about the music. I consider Stearns’s professional activities in the jazz business in chapter 3.


recorded the concert in 1938 as an anniversary present; Marx made copies for both Ward and Goodman on acetate records, a format used by collectors and bootleggers before the advent of tape recording. Though not initially made for commercial use, Avakian decided to issue the discs on LP with the help of Columbia engineer Bill Savory.¹²

Goodman’s 1938 Carnegie Hall concert marked the first time a jazz orchestra performed at the famed performance venue and it was a notable event in the bandleader’s rise to stardom during the period.¹³ The 1950 release of Goodman’s 1938 Carnegie Hall Concert LP, issued twelve years after the original concert date, was an striking display of Columbia’s new long-playing technology. Musically, the two-LP set included twenty-two tracks, six of which were over five minutes in length. Two of the tracks, “Honeysuckle Rose” and “Sing, Sing, Sing,” were over twelve minutes. The physical design, similar to other Masterworks LP sets from the era, was made to impress. The LPs came in a black box that once opened revealed extensive liner notes written by Irving Kolodin. Columbia bound these elements together within the box, so that listeners could flip from page to page and record to record. Kolodin’s notes extol the concert and by extension the records, telling listeners to cherish the set as the truthful document of a significant historical event. “So has been preserved,” wrote Kolodin,” in a representative way, one of the

¹² I mention Savory to highlight the essential role of engineers and other technicians in the record making process. Savory was known for his extensive collection of recordings made from radio broadcasts, as well as for his role in the development of the LP, along with fellow engineer William Bachman. Savory also oversaw the transfer of Columbia’s back catalog onto LP in 1948.
¹³ Goodman’s concert is the subject of two monographs, see: Jon Hancock, Benny Goodman, the Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert (Shrewsbury, UK: Prancing Fish Publishing, 2009); Catherine Tackley, Benny Goodman’s Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
authentic documents in American musical history, a verbatim report, in the accents of those who were present, on “The Night of January 16, 1939.” In 1950, at this specific moment of technological transition, Goodman’s LPs were a remarkable experimentation regarding the form and content of a jazz recording.

Along with the Ellington at Newport and 1938 Carnegie Hall Concert LPs, Avakian also produced several other iconic live records from this period. Dave Brubeck’s first album on Columbia, the acclaimed Jazz Goes to College (1954), was recorded on location at several different universities around the country. Brubeck’s next Columbia LP, Jazz at Storyville: 1954 (1954), was also live and produced by Avakian. Other top-selling live LPs include Armstrong’s Ambassador Satch (1955) and Erroll Garner’s Concert by the Sea (1955). The monumental success of Ellington at Newport has largely obscured how Avakian also issued three other LPs from the 1956 festival: Dave Brubeck and Jay & Kai at Newport, Duke Ellington and the Buck Clayton All-Stars at Newport, and Louis Armstrong and Eddie Condon at Newport.

These live albums, all issued by Columbia between 1950 and 1956, reveal a varied approach to this emerging genre of record. Some, like Concert by the Sea and 1938 Carnegie Hall Concert, originated as bootlegged recordings. The four Newport LPs, in contrast, were purposefully made with the artists’ knowledge well beforehand. Ambassador Satch included several performances that were made to sound live through manipulative techniques of post-production. In total, these records portray concert halls,
outdoor festivals, and jazz clubs; the original tapes came from a variety of sources, including enthusiasts, family members, and industry professionals. Despite the differences, Avakian remained the common thread as he experimented with different ways of producing live jazz on record.

A notion of respectability runs underneath this history of record making at Columbia. Consider the venues: Brubeck appeared on college campuses, Goodman at Carnegie Hall, Erroll Garner at a US military base in California, Armstrong in European concert halls, and the others in Newport, Rhode Island, a symbol of elite white culture. After exploding onto the national scene through Jazz Goes to College, Brubeck became the second jazz musician to ever be featured on the cover of Time magazine.\(^\text{15}\) The 1954 article emphasized Brubeck’s intellectual approach and his admiration of Bach, Beethoven, and Bartók. The accompanying photographs depict Brubeck as a happily married man and a devoted father, a clear contrast to national portrayals of jazz musicians as drug addicts and cultural delinquents.\(^\text{16}\) The article in Time legitimated jazz while also marginalizing black culture as an element of jazz’s unseemly past.\(^\text{17}\) As the person who signed the artist to Columbia, Avakian helped make Brubeck into a mainstream, popular star. In the years to come, Avakian would have similar success with Armstrong, Ellington, and Davis.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{15}\) Fellow Columbia artist Louis Armstrong was the first in 1949.

\(^{16}\) The most obvious example is Billie Holiday, whose drug addiction was national news throughout her career. This was an issue of respectability as it relates to race and class specifically, a sentiment not lost on other jazz musicians at the time.


\(^{18}\) For a similar point about Avakian, see: John Gennari, Blowin’ Hot and Cool: Jazz and Its Critics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 211.
In 1954, when the Newport Jazz Festival held its inaugural event, jazz was achieving greater social prestige than ever before. Festival organizer George Wein explicitly drew on Newport’s cultural capital as a summer resort town for many of the country’s wealthiest families. In a New Yorker profile from 1954, Wein adopted an erudite persona and expressed his desire that his festival become to jazz as Salzburg was to Mozart, Bayreuth was to Wagner, and Tanglewood was to art music within the United States.\(^9\) Towards that end, Wein augmented the musical performances at Newport with educational events that featured notable critics, academics, and other intellectuals who discussed the music’s social history and its importance to US culture. The festival also invited the Voice of America to broadcast the event on its network overseas, tying jazz to Cold War notions of democracy and American exceptionalism. The original name for the event, the American Jazz Festival, reflected Wein’s aspiration to portray the serious and respectable side of jazz, both at Newport and around the world. It is not surprising, then, that the event festivities often began with a rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner.\(^{20}\)

Avakian was no bystander to this cultural positioning. He was a charter member of the festival’s advisory board and someone professionally invested in its success. As he told writer John Fass Morton years later, Avakian desired to record the 1956 event in part to help raise money for the festival, which was faltering financially at the time.\(^{21}\) The annual event had also become a significant place to network and scout for talent. For instance, it

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\(^9\) Ibid., 226.  
\(^{20}\) For one example, see the Ellington band’s rendition on *Ellington at Newport (complete)*, disc 1, track 1.  
was Miles Davis’s 1955 Newport performance that convinced Avakian to sign the trumpeter to Columbia later that year.

When Avakian arrived at the festival grounds in 1956, he was there not only to produce records, but also to actively participate in shaping jazz’s future by pushing the music into mainstream US culture. After all, Avakian was also an Ivy League educated New Yorker and one of the first industry professionals to package jazz in the same way as classical music—first in the form of 78-rpm albums and later on 12-inch LPs on Columbia’s Masterworks Series. His Hot Jazz Classics reissue series helped establish the early jazz canon, just as his NYU course brought the music into educational spaces of economic privilege. Avakian produced jazz from the perspective of a devoted listener, though it cannot be ignored that his expertise was fostered within the halls of elite white culture and that his employer, Columbia Records, was heavily invested in both serious and mainstream popular music. It was during this cultural moment that Avakian and *Ellington at Newport* pushed the boundaries of live jazz record making.

**Troubling the Live Record**

Commercially produced live jazz recordings come in many different forms. Some were planned that way from the start, made under the direct supervision of a recording label and with full knowledge of the musicians in advance. Others were initially bootlegged by audience members with portable recording equipment and later prepared for release by record producers and audio engineers. Numerous live records have been made from radio or TV broadcasts, often years after the initial performance and without the musicians’
knowledge. They also come from a wide array of locations: outdoor festivals, large concert halls, small jazz clubs, radio or TV studios, private homes, and regular recording studios with invited audiences. In total, live records come from different sources, make their way to market with different levels of intent, and exist with different amounts of control over how and where the tapes were made.

One difficulty in encapsulating the live record genre is the slippery definition of the term “live.” According to the Oxford English Dictionary, applying the word “live” to pieces of technology dates back to the industrial revolution, when the word described a movable part of a machine that imparts motion to another component—for instance, the axle of a wheel. This was part personification, since the word was also a popular descriptor for a person full of energy and activity, especially in the United States. Such usage seamlessly translated into the electric age when “live” came to designate an active electrical current. Not coincidentally, this terminology dates to the same period that Thomas Edison commercialized the light bulb and invented the phonograph. For nearly a century and a half, “live” has meant motion and energy when applied to technology.22

Live came to reference sound beginning in the late-1930s, especially to identify an active microphone. The phrase “live mic” emerged precisely because the microphone was itself a product of the electric era of sound reproduction. Live eventually also became a term in acoustics to signify a space with a long reverberation time. Before then, however, the word was used to reference spaces in radio broadcasting, especially to contrast a

“dead” or non-reverberant room.\textsuperscript{23} A history of mass dissemination of information through sonic technology is thus embedded within the uses of live, especially in the early twentieth century as sounds increasingly moved into different electronically mediated spaces.\textsuperscript{24}

Beginning in the mid-thirties, “live radio” became a phrase that meant hearing an event at the time of its occurrence. A decade later, this terminology transferred directly to descriptions of television and other media.\textsuperscript{25} In total, these examples demonstrate how the adjectival form of the word live, which would later be applied to the LP, implicates the historical intersection of sound reproduction, mass consumer culture, and expanding distribution networks of information. After all, a “live” recording became appealing to consumers in part because technological innovation allowed new forms of contact with far away events and the people there originally to witness them.

The term “live” did not appear in the titles or liner notes of jazz records until the late-1950s, when the word soon became ubiquitous.\textsuperscript{26} Still, it was common in

\textsuperscript{23} Rebecca Schneider points to the negative definitions of live found in many dictionaries, which tend to explain “live” as “not dead” or “not from a recording,” Rebecca Schneider, \textit{Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment} (New York: Routledge, 2010), 90. For a discussion on deadness as opposed to liveness, see: David Novak, “2.5 X 6 Metres of Space: Japanese Music Coffeehouses and Experimental Practices of Listening,” \textit{Popular Music} 27, no. 1 (2008): 48–51.

\textsuperscript{24} “Live,” \textit{OED Online}.

\textsuperscript{25} In the 1940s, the musicians’ union fought against wide-scale adoption of recording for fear that recordings would take jobs away from their constituency. As Paul Sanden argues, recordings were “mechanical” where in-person performance was dynamic and “live.” The term thus became associated with genuine music making and “truth” to a certain degree. Paul Sanden, \textit{Liveness in Modern Music: Musicians, Technology, and the Perception of Performance} (New York: Routledge, 2013), 4. Sanden goes on to quote Sarah Thornton: “The expression ‘live music’ soaked up the aesthetic and ethical connotations of life-versus-death, human-versus-mechanical, creative-verses-imitative.” Sarah Thornton, \textit{Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital} (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1996), 42.

\textsuperscript{26} There is disagreement among scholars surrounding the birth of “live” as a commercial category in music. Philip Auslander believes it to be in the 1930s whereas Sara Thornton dates it to the 1950s.
advertisements for record players and other equipment to emphasize the “lifelike” quality of sound afforded by the LP. An August 1948 Columbia advertisement for the LP appearing in the Los Angeles Times proclaims: “Imagine a new tone quality so lifelike you’ll scarcely believe you’re listening to a record!”27 Fred Reynolds, a Chicago Daily Tribune columnist, echoes this sentiment in the August 7, 1950 rendition of his “Platter Chatter” column: “The smooth, non-breakable record surfaces, together with the finest recording techniques, give you extraordinary lifelike reproduction.”28 Similar advertisements began appearing in jazz publications as well. A cartoon ad for Jensen Needles in the December 12, 1956 issue of Down Beat reads: “Gosh, Martha, these records sound so clear with this JENSEN NEEDLE that you’d swear those musicians were right here in this very room.”29 As soon as the LP went to market, descriptions of the technology adopted a discourse of fidelity that rested on claims of lifelike reproduction and notions of liveness.

a sense, they are both correct. The growth and proliferation of the radio in the 1930s and the television in the 1950s led to new commercial categories for synchronous broadcasts in their respective milieus. For my purposes, the actual first usages of “live” in this respect are not as important as the cultural underpinnings that the term actually relied on, namely the perception that mechanical reproduction of events and performances was possible. Jonathan Sterne, for example, traces culturally constructed notions of “lifelike” reproduction to the nineteenth century, when the technologies of reproduction were being invented. Philip Auslander, Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008 [1999]), 39. Thornton, Club Cultures, 41–42. Jonathan Sterne, The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

27 Columbia Records, Advertisement, “Now Demonstrating . . . the record that plays up to 45 minutes!” 30 August 1948, Los Angeles Times, 12.

28 Fred Reynolds, “Platter Chatter,” Chicago Daily Tribune, 7 August 1950, A2. Reynolds particularly lauds the LP for its increased fidelity.

29 Jensen Needles, Advertisement, 12 December 1956, Down Beat.
Here, I understand liveness as a historically specific set of principles of reproduced sound.\textsuperscript{30} Since liveness is contingent on its creators and producers, its qualities change over time. Liveness today does not mean the same thing that it did in the 1950s, even though there are significant overlaps in its central properties and definitions. One commonality is the idea of synchronicity, where all sounds on record (manufactured or not) aurally appear to have occurred at the same point in time and in the same location.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{30} Liveness has been extensively debated in performance studies, most famously in Philip Auslander’s 1999 monograph, \textit{Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture}. In response to Peggy Phelan’s assertion that the live and reproduced are mutually exclusive and ontologically separate entities, Auslander usefully questions this binary and argues that “live” only exists as a result of reproduction. Despite some discussion of historical development over time, Auslander’s argument is essentially a presentist one, written with a purpose of understanding performance in the contemporary moment. Diana Taylor similarly questions Phelan by going the opposite direction to consider cultural memory and remembrance through performing bodies before that age of mechanical reproduction. Rebecca Schneider takes up the idea of corporal reproduction in depth. Schneider contends that the constant referential mechanisms through performance collapse a linear trajectory of history on itself, similarly questioning Phelan’s ontological separation of performance and its reproduction. Performance is, she suggests, its own means of recording. Such observations have particular consequences for understanding the ontology of jazz performance, since jazz performances (and improvisation in particular) constantly reference jazz history on record. Jazz performance, too, is “mediatized” (following Auslander) but does so through the bodily internalization of the music’s history on record (following Taylor and Schneider). This discussion is somewhat tangential to my interest in the \textit{recorded sounds} of liveness, compared to the liveness of \textit{performance}. Nevertheless, this intellectual trajectory demonstrates that the mechanics of jazz performance and its relationship to its recorded reproductions have a complex and multilayered relationship that cannot be reduced to a discussion of live or not live. For the debates in performance studies, see: Auslander, \textit{Liveness}; Peggy Phelan, \textit{Unmarked: The Politics of Performance} (New York: Routledge, 1993), 146–66; Diana Taylor, \textit{The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas} (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 141–46; Schneider, \textit{Performing Remains}, 90–93. For a related discussion from the perspective of media studies, see Sterne’s work on the social genesis of sound fidelity: Sterne, \textit{The Audible Past}, 215–25. For more on the self-referentiality of jazz performance, see: Mark Katz, \textit{Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 80–94; Paul Berliner, \textit{Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

\textsuperscript{31} For more on the idea of synchronicity in this context, see: Schneider, \textit{Performing Remains}, 90. Evan Eisenberg makes a similar point in his discussion of radio: “Radio puts its dispersed listeners under the spell of a shared event. The ritual aura of live performance—rhetorical, musical, what
The impression of simultaneity entangles the past and present, closing the temporal gap between a performance at one time and listeners at another. Some examples include audience applause and conversation, onstage announcements, and the audible presence of musical mistakes. Such examples imbue a feeling of real-time interaction—a social aurality on record. The processes of encoding such moments into the grooves of record are also historically specific, where record producers, audio engineers, and musicians have a particular idea of what matters to their listeners: what they hear, what they value in those sounds, and how they connect those aural elements to the world around them. Liveness implicates ways of knowing through sound, or what Steven Feld terms acoustemology.32

My conception of liveness on record follows that of musicologist Paul Sanden in many respects. In the first full length study of how liveness functions in musical cultures, Sanden’s *Liveness in Modern Music* argues that the experience of liveness rests on the “perception of performance” rather than on the actuality of that performance.33 To this I have you—is broadcast. This has nothing to do with radio waves or brain waves; it is a simple matter of simultaneity.” Evan Eisenberg, *The Recording Angel: Music, Records and Culture from Aristotle to Zappa* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 31.


add that the perception of liveness also depends on the network of social practices that surround record making at each stage of the process, from performing to recording, through manufacturing, circulation, and listening. Because the creation of liveness rests on the interaction of listeners with their respective listening technologies, the social networks behind the creative and technical decisions that go into making records matter a great deal. Moreover, audio-visual components affect the perception of liveness, including cover images and photographs, liner notes, advertisements, and other promotional ephemera that also changed with the adoption of the LP. Understood together, these elements reveal much about specific values and usage of these records in creating a sense of music happening in the here and now.

Jazz records are mediated at several levels. This includes the processes (and materials) of recording, sound processing, the editing of tapes, and the final mastering, in addition to the design of album covers and the creation of the liner notes. Through such processes, many decisions are made about the presentation of the live event, often in such a way that seeks to erase all of this labor that has gone into it.\(^{34}\) Live records such as *Ellington at Newport* tell stories about themselves that obfuscate the methods of mediation. Though they often sell themselves as such, live jazz records are not documents


of a specific event, but a carefully curated representation of that event. In the mid-1950s when Columbia issued *Ellington at Newport*, liveness was something that had to be developed over time as listeners came to understand what live jazz records sounded like.

**Producing Newport**

The 1999 reissue of *Ellington at Newport* did not reflect well on Avakian’s production of the 1956 LP. Articles in trade publication, magazines, and newspapers championed Schaap’s restoration of the concert tapes. With titles such as “What Really Happened at Newport? The Dimming of a Masterpiece” (*Coda*), “Repairing a Classic With an Ugly Secret” (*Fortune*), “Setting the Record Straight: Reissue of *Ellington at Newport* a lot More Live than Original LP” (*The Denver Post*), these articles (and others) portrayed the 1956 LP as a fraudulent document that had falsely represented the band’s performance for more than four decades. On one hand, listeners had a well-loved LP that they now knew to be heavily edited with overdubbed audience noises and added reverb. On the other, they had a CD claiming to restore the live performance to its unmodified state. Audio production

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35 This is true of all forms of reproduction, from the first mass produced 78-rpm discs to radio broadcasts, from the images on a television or at the movie theater to the digital media streaming online today. See: Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 218.
was at the center of the debate over which recording sounded most accurate and representative of the Newport concert as it had happened on stage in 1956.

Avakian aggressively defended his production of the *Ellington at Newport* LP by writing letters to various members of the jazz press, drafting newspaper editorials, speaking at conferences, and giving interviews about what he saw as a purposeful attack through misinformation. He also began collecting various materials related to the reissue, including CD reviews, newspaper clippings, personal correspondences, letters to the editor, press releases, printouts of internet forum discussions, hand written notes, and transcripts of conference presentations. One such document contains a typed transcription of Schaap’s liner notes extensively annotated by Avakian. Although at times Avakian’s responses are reactionary, a comparison between the 1999 CD and the 1956 LP through Schaap and Avakian’s words reveals changing ideologies of producing live jazz records, bringing greater clarity to Avakian’s approach in 1956.

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37 Here I draw from materials collected during 2012 from George Avakian’s private collection in Riverdale, New York. The collection is now housed at the New York Public Library. I label documents from this collection as AA (Avakian Archive), followed by the subject heading and subheadings (where possible) separated by a comma. Headings correspond to the folder location in his filing cabinets, organized alphabetically. For example, Avakian to Gary Giddins, TDS, 21 April 1999, AA: Duke Ellington, Newport/Schaap, G.A. Correspondence on Topic.

38 Most of this material can be found in AA: Ellington, Newport/Schaap. See in particular the “G.A. Correspondence,” “Schaap Liners,” and “P. Shukat” folders.

39 The details of the situation are even more complex and personal. Sources in Avakian’s archive dating back to 1995 reveal that he was originally scheduled to produce the *Newport* reissue and was also responsible for beginning the negotiations with the Library of Congress to use the VOA tapes: “Jazz Release Overview 1995–1997,” Columbia/Legacy Internal Documentation, TD, AA: Sony Legacy Plans; George Avakian, “Producing Discussion with Steve Berkowitz,” TDS, 9 November 1995, AA: Columbia/Epic Records, Reissues; and Avakian to Steve Berkowitz, TDS, 27 September 1996, AA: Columbia/Epic Records, Reissues. Additionally, Michael Ullman reported in 1996 on Avakian’s discovery of a “better-balanced tape” for a reissue with “better sound.” Michael Ullman,
Schaap’s notes portray Avakian as the sole decision maker in the manipulation of the tapes in post-production:

SCHAAP:
Ellington at Newport intended to tell this story [of Paul Gonsalves’s solo] to the record buying public. It did, but Columbia Records was convinced that post-production would be necessary to allow the music to deliver its message. The album Ellington at Newport doctored the music.40

AVAKIAN:
* - But it was Duke who was so convinced that post-production would be needed for the Suite that he phoned me on July 6 to arrange [it], if possible.
* - “Doctored?” In order to release a viable album, highly professional editing was needed. And it was done at Duke’s request. I gave the final acetates to Strayhorn to deliver to Duke, who then phoned to say, “I have only two things to say, George. One is, don’t change a thing and the other is, thank you.”41

Avakian inserts Ellington and Strayhorn’s involvement to highlight how the situation, from his perspective, involved close technological and musical collaboration in order to reconcile the difference between Ellington’s artistic vision for the suite and the performance as recorded at Newport. As evidence, Avakian says here and elsewhere that Ellington, fearing an under-prepared performance, requested the studio reservation several days before the July 7 performance at Newport.42

40 Phil Schaap, liner notes to Ellington at Newport (Complete), Duke Ellington, Legacy C2K 64932, CD, 1999, 21. For similar comments from Schaap, see pages 19, 22, and 32 of that same document. For a detailed discussion of Schaap’s sources see: Harvey Cohen, Duke Ellington’s America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 621fn9 and Morton, Backstory in Blue, 205.
42 All see: Cohen, Duke Ellington’s America, 621fn9 and Morton, Backstory in Blue, 201–210. Avakian booked a New York studio on July 9—the Monday after the Saturday night performance—to help patch up the concert recordings where necessary.
Since their livelihoods often depend on records, musicians have always had professional reasons to be enormously invested in the sound of their recordings. African American musicians throughout jazz history have struggled to gain more commercial and financial control of their music and its representations. This includes having input about a variety of aspects during the production, marketing, and distribution of their records. Ellington, for example, attempted several times in his early career to have his music issued on 12-inch 78-rpm records, a format almost strictly reserved for “serious” music and that rarely featured African Americans. Ellington was largely unsuccessful, though he did release several extended compositions on opposing sides of 10-inch discs, first with “Creole Rhapsody” (1931) and later with the four-sided “Reminiscing in Tempo” (1935) and the two-sided “Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue” (1937).

Ellington was famously successful in maximizing his potential sources of revenue and, by the time of the 1956 Newport concert, his star power within the industry directly translated to control over his decisions in the studio. In his 2010 Ellington biography, historian Harvey Cohen describes a close working relationship between Avakian and Ellington beginning in the early-1950s, detailing how Ellington began approving final takes by listening to playbacks from the control room. “Ellington was so involved with sound,”

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43 Porter, *What is This Thing Called Jazz?*, 42–43, 63–65, 177–82.
Avakian told Cohen, "to a degree that almost no one else was."\(^{45}\) Columbia issued two LPs from this collaboration, *Masterpieces by Ellington* (1951) and *Ellington Uptown* (1952), on their Masterworks Series. At the time, Ellington’s Masterworks LPs were an unprecedented feat for an African American jazz musician.

Consider a rehearsal excerpt from the July 9, 1956, studio date released on the 1999 CD.\(^{46}\) The track opens with the band tuning, soon interrupted by a voice (possibly Avakian) from the control room: “Ok, here we go. ‘Festival Junction,’ take one” (CD: 0:18). Jimmy Hamilton begins his solo introduction to the suite opener with a soft, extended B-flat before stating the main theme. Expecting a chord from Ellington, Hamilton holds a high D-flat before stopping to discuss the problem (CD: 0:36–0:40). Once everything is settled, Ellington sarcastically remarks, “That was real good, you shouldn’t have messed that up.” He then softly adds, “We’re still liable to use it—we’ll paste it on” (CD: 1:03).

Though the stage and the studio differ remarkably as spaces for music making, each location has its own possibilities and potential. Ellington’s comment, “we’ll paste it on,” shows his awareness of the technology in the control room and acknowledgement of its capabilities. Moreover, his phrasing and word choice relates his own involvement in the process—not you or they but “we.” Mistakes create their own possibilities in the

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\(^{45}\) Against this background, Cohen concludes that it is “difficult to imagine” that Avakian demanded anything of Ellington to the extreme Schaap implies. Cohen, *Duke Ellington’s America*, 291, 621fn9. John Gennari, writing about the 1956 Newport Festival, also describes Ellington as a “savvy operator who knew how to work with promoters like Wein to advance his own interests.” Gennari, *Blowin’ Hot and Cool*, 234.

\(^{46}\) Ellington, *Newport (Complete)*, disc 2, track 9.
studio. Control over the technological mediation of those mistakes, as Ellington was likely aware, was another form of artistic agency and control.\footnote{Here Ellington can be understood through what Alexander Weheliye labels as “sonic Afro-modernity,” whereby black cultural producers gained greater control over their representations through technology. Alexander G. Weheliye, “‘I Am I Be’: The Subject of Sonic Afro-Modernity,” \textit{boundary} 2 30, no. 2 (2003): 100. For more on how audio production implicates politics of race and ethnicity, see: Meintjes, \textit{Sound of Africa}; Fred Moten, \textit{In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).}

The CD reissue also reveals an under-prepared performance at Newport and of the Festival Suite in particular. Individual solos come off well, but ensemble passages are often sloppy with missed entrances, flubbed notes, and other audible mistakes. In his annotations to Schaap’s liner notes, Avakian writes that his intention was to correct mistakes played by the band on the Newport stage:

Duke was hugely grateful that something could be done to save the material, just as he had anticipated in asking me to reserve a studio on July 9. ... Among the musicians, Cat Anderson and Johnny Hodges warmly expressed their gratitude that their several fluffs would not be permanently heard by the record-buying public.\footnote{Avakian, “Ellington Newport CD annotation,” 7. Avakian was responding to comments that can be found in: Schaap, notes to \textit{Ellington (Complete)}, 21.}

Ellington was, according to Avakian, concerned about the reception of \textit{Festival Suite} since it had been several years since his last long-form work.\footnote{Cohen, \textit{Duke Ellington’s America}, 332.} The motivations for his 1956 post-production stemmed from Avakian’s desire to smooth out some of the mistakes so that they would not distract from the overall intent of the music.

Issues of race and class underlie these decisions about permanence through repeatability. In the early-to-mid-1950s, Columbia’s listening demographic was mainstream America, largely defined by a white majority. A large portion of the label’s
jazz roster consisted of swing era jazz musicians—Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, and Buck Clayton—that were popular stars of the 1930s and 1940s. Avakian approached these musicians through an aesthetic of respectability; Goodman and Ellington’s discs on the Masterworks Series serve as evidence. Avakian’s treatment of rising stars like Dave Brubeck and Miles Davis simultaneously pointed to popular cultures of mass consumption (Dave Digs Disney, 1957) and cultural respectability through a mixture of jazz and art music (Miles Ahead, 1957). Recall from chapter 1 the struggle over Davis’s Miles Ahead album cover, which initially depicted a white woman in a sailboat.

Louis Armstrong was a key figure in Columbia’s mainstream strategy. In 1955, he was “ambassador” Satch traveling in West Africa and performing in European concert halls. In July 1956, the same month of Ellington’s Newport performance, the film High Society opened in US theaters. Staring Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly, and Frank Sinatra, High Society opens with several long overhead shots of Newport city accompanied by Armstrong’s singing. His lyrics specifically reference the festival. The movie depicts an archetypical love triangle set within the confines of elite white culture, with Armstrong’s music bookending the movie’s plot. As John Gennari argues, Armstrong’s role was a typical Hollywood formula where a black jazz musician was used to “authenticate a white star’s knowing hipness.”

50 Goodman intentionally crossed the musical lines between jazz and western art music. At various points in his career he performed and recorded the music of Igor Stravinsky, Darius Milhaud, Claude Debussy, Johannes Brahms, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. He also commissioned works by Béla Bartók, Morton Gould, and Aaron Copland. See, Tackley, Benny Goodman’s Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert, 156.
51 Gennari, Blowin’ Hot and Cool, 227.
Columbia’s audience for *Ellington at Newport* was not solely jazz aficionados but a wide range of listeners. In this way, the label was quite different than a company like Prestige Records, who catered to a jazz insider listenership and where a mistake kept on record signaled a novel use of technology. For Columbia, a mistake-free performance and a clean recording was the ideal end product. According to Cohen, Avakian recalls that Ellington was open to experimentation in the studio if it improved the end result. The evidence bears this out. For instance, Ellington’s 1953 version of “The Mooche” on the *Ellington Uptown* LP (1953) features heavy amounts of reverb during a call and response clarinet duet between Russell Procope and Jimmy Hamilton (LP: 1:32–2:25). His LP *Blue Rose*, a 1956 collaboration with Rosemary Clooney, featured overdubbed vocals recorded in Los Angeles two weeks after the band laid down the initial tracks in New York City. From Avakian’s perspective, the edits to the *Newport* LP were necessary in order to release a viable album that could be repeatedly listened to and sold to a wide consumer demographic. For Ellington, a mistake-free performance was also ideal because it appealed to Ellington’s sense of artistry and aesthetics.

One example of a corrected mistake can be heard on the band’s rendition of “I Got It Bad (and That Ain’t Good),” a well-known Ellington standard featuring saxophonist Johnny Hodges. Though played immediately following “Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue” during the concert, Avakian released “I Got It Bad” in 1956 on the A-side of another

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53 Ellington’s early career especially can be viewed through a lens of racial uplift, from his nickname, the “Duke,” to his interest in long-form composition, to his interest in concert jazz. For an in-depth discussion of Ellington’s composition in relation to these ideals, see: Howland, *Ellington Uptown*, 246–93.
LP recorded at Newport: *The Duke Ellington And Buck Clayton All-Stars*.\(^5^4\) During the Newport concert, Hodges badly flubs the third note of the melody on two separate occasions (CD: 0:18 and 0:46). In an effort to correct such a prominent mistake, Avakian decided to splice in sixteen measures of music that came from the band’s studio session. This insertion can be heard between Hodges’s two misplayed notes.\(^5^5\)

Jazz records circulate within a cultural economy based around moments of mastery and spontaneity during performance. Mistakes come to have different meanings depending on the circumstances. On the one hand, they are a valued aspect of jazz history and many listeners champion jazz for being, as critic Ted Gioia has written, the “imperfect art.”\(^5^6\) Mistakes like Hodges’s missed note, on the other hand, stand out in a way that weakens the performance and have the potential to distract listeners. By splicing tape to include sounds not of *that* moment but of *another*, Avakian undercuts the beginning-to-end quality of the recording. Such edits, however, were done to create a listening experience that would stand up to repeated listenings by non-expert listeners rather than with an intention to faithfully represent Hodge’s playing that particular night in Newport. Avakian’s annotation signifies that permanence via repeatability was the incentive for most, if not all, of his changes made in post-production. If the performance at Newport

\(^{54}\) Avakian writes elsewhere that he produced the four Newport LPs as a set. He released them concurrently, though they sold individually.


was about the live moment, then the recording session was about the repeatability of that moment as it appealed to Columbia’s listening demographic.

In the 1950s, as popular music scholar Albin Zak argues, records were not only about “truthful documentary” but also about the “aesthetic impact” rendered from the performance.57 In the case of the *Ellington at Newport* LP, Avakian attempted to produce a particular kind of listening experience that was not about faithful representation, but audile realism—hearing the event as live.58 Agents of sound reproduction such as producers, engineers, and other professionals must be prepared, technologically and otherwise, for when such moments transpire on stage or in the recording studio. Producer Bob Thiele succinctly summed this up when asked about recording saxophonist John Coltrane: “You gotta capture it when it happens. That’s jazz.”59 If something goes wrong, however, jazz producers had to be technologically prepared. As Avakian recalled, “You had to know . . . the acoustical properties of a studio and . . . [have] a pretty good idea of what the engineer was able to do so you could . . . get the sound that you wanted.”60 Avakian’s comment speaks to the intertwined and creative relationship between jazz performance and technological mediation. From the perspective of a producer, both studio and stage are creative spaces for music making that necessitate a skilled and inventive ability to render such moments repeatable on record.

60 Cohen, *Duke Ellington’s America*, 290.
Producing Gonsalves’s Solo

In a draft of an unpublished letter from August 2004 to John McDonough of the Wall Street Journal, Avakian recalled his reaction at the 1956 Newport Festival after Ellington’s band finished their performance of “Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue”:

Under ordinary circumstances, Paul's gaffe could have been forgiven or he could have been spliced out, but this solo was the absolute focus of what I instantly realized was surely the Ellington orchestra’s most exciting performance ever, and that at all costs it must be released even though what I heard was seriously flawed.\(^{61}\)

Columbia’s directional microphones were set up as carefully as possible to record a clean sound from all parts of the ensemble in order to give the mixing engineers the most control. Even so, when Gonsalves mistakenly stepped to the wrong microphone there was little hope of accurately recording him in full, since the mixing had to be done onsite and during the performance. Mixing engineer Adjutor “Pappy” Theroux did his best to adjust the balance, which audibly happens between twenty and thirty seconds into the solo (LP: 4:20 to 4:30).

After listening back to the tapes, Avakian felt that Gonsalves was still much too low in the mix and that “drastic steps had to be taken to restore some degree of what actually had happened.”\(^ {62}\) He relied on his assistant, Calvin Lampley, and engineer George Knuerr to salvage the raw recordings using equalization, tape splicing, and an echo chamber.


\(^{62}\) Ibid., 4.
Beginning in the 1950s, recording engineers began creating echo and reverb by running sound through a speaker located in a reverberant space, using another microphone to pick up the room sound or “ambience.” They would then feed back this signal into the mixing desk and blend it with the initial source. Avakian describes how his team used this state-of-the-art technology in 1956 to repair, reconstruct, and eventually showcase a historic moment on LP:

To rescue the great performance of “Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue,” the equalization (the ratio between high and low frequencies of sound) had to be changed, sometimes every few seconds, as Gonsalves’s solo rose up and down in register, even though it also changed the sound of everything else on the tape. With no other means available to attempt corrections than a variable pitch oscillator and an echo chamber, re-recording engineer George Knuerr and I made dozens of splices, bringing the soloist forward as required, then splicing the solo together. Under the primitive conditions we were forced to work in 1956, it became necessary to hide these splices in order to maintain a continuous flow of the music and preserve the phenomenal drive that Gonsalves and the band had created. The only way was to hide those changes of equalization and sound level by masking them under additional crowd noise that distracted the ear from the otherwise noticeable cuts in the tape. The result was a steady flow of undistracted music which conveys the feeling of what actually took place.

Avakian characterizes his editing and equalization as a creative and highly professional activity on the part of himself and his engineers to aurally reconstruct a feeling of what “actually had happened.” For him, the raw tapes were neither representative nor faithful to the performance. As he writes elsewhere in this same document: “Musically, the original unedited recording did not sound like what the audience actually heard.”

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63 This room was called an echo chamber even though it could produce both echo and reverb. For specifics on Columbia’s use of the technique see: Zak, I Don’t Sound Like Nobody, 162.
65 Ibid., 2.
In Avakian’s hands, studio technology became a restorative vehicle based around an aesthetic of *sonic realism* and directed towards the LP’s eventual listeners. He equalized, masked, added, and spliced a recording to sound like, in his words, “what the audience heard,” which is a statement not about reality but about the perception of it. Avakian’s initial editing and equalization made his mediation audible, destabilizing the record’s believability as a “live” event. So it became necessary to distract the ear in order to sustain the affective reproduction of the music’s “flow” and “drive,” as well as the “feeling of what actually took place.” Such an approach recalls Sterne’s argument that sound reproduction is not necessarily a “mimetic art” but rather about “crafting a particular kind of listening experience.”

Avakian’s heavily edited production demonstrates a dedication to an ideology of record making that privileges the perception of the live moment, rather than faithful representation.

The changing uses of studio technology within the industry during the 1950s that disrupted the beginning-to-end quality of a musical performance on record made it increasingly difficult to claim the existence of an authentic original. As producers’ decisions about the sonic persona of records increasingly came to depend on micro decisions about microphone placement, tape editing, equalization during mixing, and other forms of sound processing, records became less about real life sonic representations and more about the sound aesthetics of high fidelity. As fidelity increased with the latest technology, as Albin Zak writes, it became increasingly difficult to answer the question,

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“Fidelity to what?” Avakian’s Ellington at Newport LP hinges on its ability to create and capture the spirit of the event in sound, even if the LP was a reproduction of a performance in which there is no original.

Listening to a concert at home with a record player is a culturally structured activity that can re/produce liveness, the quality of a recording that creates a sense of performing happening in the here and now. Believability arises because listeners allow it. Liveness is not something that sound inherently possesses—it can neither "hold faith nor be faithful" as Sterne says—but a quality that listeners ascribe to it. Avakian did his editing and studio manipulation with the assumption that his listeners’ ears could and would make the perceptive leap to construct the sense (a “flow” or “drive,” as he says) of the event with their record player at home. A producer does, above all, function as someone who mediates between artist and consumer using sonic technologies. Avakian did his editing and studio manipulation, in other words, with certain assumptions about

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67 Zak, I Don’t Sound Like Nobody, 152. For a lengthy discussion on how technologies of high fidelity were changing listening during this period see: Tim Anderson, Making Easy Listening: Material Culture and Postwar American Recording (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 103–49.
68 In her discussion about the changing ontology of performance from the live moment to its reproduction, Diana Taylor points to various ways that the original “is never as whole as its representation” because of the ways that performance circulates within various cultural economies. Taylor, Archive and the Repertoire, 143–44. Relatedly, Sterne understands fidelity as a cultural phenomenon based around an ontological separation constructed between original and copy. This separation, he continues, obscures how the “original is itself an artifact of the process of reproduction. Without the technology of reproduction, the copies do not exist, but then, neither would the originals.” Sterne, The Audible Past, 216–219.
70 Sterne, Audible Past, 282.
the listening habits of his consumers. He crafted a particular kind of listening experience meant to tap into feelings that audience members might get from a face-to-face encounter at a live jazz concert.

**Making Records Live, Making Live Records**

When Avakian traveled to Newport, Rhode Island in July of 1956, he was contributing to a long arc of experimentation in the form and content of the jazz record, of which *Ellington at Newport* was only one part. In the mid-1950s Avakian produced a series of in-studio jam session records with trumpeter Buck Clayton that included musical tracks that comprised the entire side of a 12-inch LP (roughly twenty minutes). In the years to come, Avakian would explore conceptual albums with long-form musical compositions and themes. This included Davis’s work with Gil Evans on *Miles Ahead* (1957) and Brubeck’s “Jazz Impressions” series, which began with a 1958 LP titled *Jazz Impressions of Eurasia*. With a cover depicting Brubeck in front of a Pan-Am airplane, the *Jazz Impressions* LP features six original compositions that Brubeck composed in response to the quartet’s three-month, worldwide tour. Avakian also oversaw several LPs of extended concert jazz, including *Music for Brass* (1957) and *Modern Jazz Concert* (1958).

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73 Several other labels experimented with jazz on LP by issuing long-form poetry accompanied by jazz. This included Fantasy's *Allyn Ferguson and Kenneth Patchen with the Chamber Jazz Sextet* (1957) and *Poetry Readings in the Cellar* (1957) in addition to Cadence Records's *Kenneth Patchen with Chamber Jazz Sextet* (1959). Relatedly, Riverside issued two spoken-word, oral histories on LP.
Manipulation of performance time through studio production played a large role in Avakian’s trajectory. On Miles Davis’s first LP for Columbia, *'Round About Midnight* (1957), Avakian and Davis meticulously planned the session to include multiple run-throughs of each song. The issued version of “Ah-Leu-Cha” was made from two takes spliced together, with the edit point in the middle of Davis’s solo.\(^7^4\) The track “Atlanta Blues” on *Louis Armstrong Plays W. C. Handy* (1954) includes Armstrong playing a duet with himself, a feat accomplished by overdubbing a trumpet and scat solo onto the original track. Avakian used the same technique on *Miles Ahead* (1956), where most of Davis’s solos were later inserted.\(^7^5\) *Ambassador Satch* included manufactured live performances, made by combining musical performances with audience sounds initially recorded at other live concerts.\(^7^6\) In the years since, Columbia has become known for its heavy-handed production on its jazz records from this period, a practice that has fallen out of favor with many of today’s listeners.\(^7^7\) At the time, however, Avakian was using the latest studio techniques during the same period: *Coleman Hawkins: A Documentary* (1958) and *Satchmo and Me: Lil Armstrong’s Own Story* (1957). In 1957, Riverside also reissued Alan Lomax’s 1938 interviews with Jelly Roll Morton on a series of twelve LPs: *Jelly Roll Morton: The Library of Congress Recordings Volume 1–12*. (These recordings first appeared on LP in 1950 on Circle Records.)

\(^7^4\) Davis discographer Peter Losin reports that “Ah-Leu-Cha” is made from takes 4 and 5 with a splice point at 1:58. Avakian did the same thing with “Two Bass Hit” and “Little Melonae,” though both tracks were not released on the 1955 LP. Peter Losin, “Miles Ahead session details: October 26, 1955,” accessed 12 February 2015, [http://www.plosin.com/MilesAhead/Sessions.aspx?sessionid=551026](http://www.plosin.com/MilesAhead/Sessions.aspx?sessionid=551026).

\(^7^5\) For a detailed description of the studio techniques used on this record, and how they influenced subsequent reissues, see: Phil Schaap, liner notes to *Miles Davis, Gil Evans: The Complete Columbia Studio Recordings*, Miles Davis and Gil Evans, Columbia-Legacy CKX 67397, 1996, 145–150.

\(^7^6\) George Avakian, interview with the author, July 2012.

capabilities during a transitionary moment, where the fundamental idea of recording jazz was in question.

Studio production is one link among many along the chain of mediation from performance to commercial record. Variables such as the location of microphones and public address speakers, the natural acoustics of the venue, and any other form of electronic amplification transform, manipulate, and mediate the concert-going experience as well. As media historian Philip Auslander has argued: “In a sense, the mix, even when performed live, is a transformation of the actual performance produced by the musicians. In such a case, the audience has no access to the ‘real’ event, but only to its transformed version.” Though Auslander perhaps goes too far in collapsing all live performances into the category of mediatization, his argument nevertheless unsettles any claims of authenticity regarding an unmediated live recording or performance. While the crowd on Ellington’s LP was made through the manipulation of sonic characteristics in the studio, technologies of sound reproduction were present at the Newport concert as well. The public space of music making has similar characteristics of mediation and alteration.

Moreover, Columbia’s target audience in 1956 was a wide demographic of music consumers. Avakian was, throughout his tenure at Columbia, the head of popular albums, which included all jazz musicians on the label’s roster. With the rise of technological possibilities in the studio, effects such as overdubbing, echo, reverb, and others came to

79 For a more developed notion of mediatization, see: Auslander, Liveness, 5.
have a normalized presence in popular music during the 1950s. As Albin Zak observes, “records were no longer simply aural snapshots but deliberately crafted musical texts.”

Though such effects were not widely used in jazz, records in this genre remained, as music scholar Andrew Blake argues, “largely in the world of simulation,” even as it was becoming possible to emulate “the structure of the jazz concert itself.”

Several Ellington recordings from the late-1950s produced by Irving Townsend, including Newport 1958 and Dance to Duke! at the Bal Masque (1959), used studio recordings with audience overdubs. Despite this fact, both records claimed to be recorded “in performance” in their liner notes and other promotional materials.

On Ellington at Newport, Avakian used studio production to cultivate a sense of place as the Newport stage, most noticeable in the sounds of the audience. When asked about the 1956 LP, Avakian has long maintained that capturing the Newport audience was a primary concern. Onsite recording for commercial purposes in 1956 was a new venture for a major label like Columbia, but Avakian and his team were prepared with several microphones including two that were suspended above the stage for the express purpose of capturing the crowd noise and ambience of the event.

On the LP, Avakian’s added crowd noise becomes increasingly noticeable about one minute and forty-five seconds into the performance.

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80 Zak, I Don’t Sound Like Nobody, 162. Zak also argues that the “frank artifice” of popular records in the early-1950s “rendered the goal of real life sonic depiction meaningless” (153).
81 Blake, “Role of the Producer,” 43.
82 The entirety of At the Bal Masque and eight of ten tracks on Newport 1958 were studio recordings with overdubbed applause by producer Irving Townsend.
83 Ullman, “The Jazz Column,” 463, and Morton, Backstory in Blue, 106. Concert photos show an abundance of microphones on stage (ten or more) since Columbia and VOA each had their own systems. Ibid., 113, 120, 155. For more photos see: Schaap, notes to Ellington (Complete), 23–25.
the solo (LP: 5:45), accompanied by shouts from Ellington at the piano bench. About a minute later (LP: 6:45), the crowd and drummer Sam Woodyard’s propelling beat account for most of the sonic density, nearly overwhelming Gonsalves. The audience’s sound, which has ebbed and flowed throughout, but in an upward trajectory overall, reaches its peak when Gonsalves holds a six measure high note that introduces his final chorus (LP: 10:12). Just below the surface, nearly hidden beneath the excitement, Ellington shouts “yeah, yeah, yeah” as the solo comes to a close.

The same moments on the CD reissue, without the added crowd noise, reveal a much more tempered audience. With few reflective surfaces at an outdoor venue like Newport, sounds dissipate quickly, even those of a large crowd. The audience reaction is clearly audible at points like Gonsalves’s high note at the end of his solo (CD: 9:53), but the most discernible sounds are individuals such as the four distinctive cries of “whoo” that can be heard during an earlier part of the solo (CD: 9:15). Like Ellington’s cries from the piano bench, such shouts express excitement, energy, and enthusiasm. These shouts are audible in the LP as well, but they blend in with the rest of the crowd, one vocalization among many.

The sounds of a large crowd, as opposed to individual voices, help the technology of sound reproduction bridge the fantastical gap between here and there, now and then. Avakian spliced, cut, copied, and edited in more voices—a crowd en masse—in order to cultivate the feeling of a performance for listeners not accustomed to hearing live jazz recordings. The audience on Ellington at Newport has a sonically rendered presence, where different sounds come to indicate different levels of engagement between the
audience and performers on stage. In sound engineering, as ethnomusicologist David Novak details, the term “presence” refers to the upper midrange frequencies and the so-called critical band where most linguistic communication occurs. Accordingly, a high number of frequencies in this range create an effect of making sounds feel closer or more “present.”

In the context of performance, presence can also refer to the quality or manner of performers and their interaction with the audience. Similar to the quality of liveness, this type of presence implies a feeling of immediacy that comes from face-to-face interaction where the audience has, as Paul Allain and Jen Harvie write, “a sense of the importance of being in that moment at the event.” The presence of the audience on record, similar to presence in audio engineering, relates to a feeling of proximity and a sense of “being there.” The complex layering of Avakian’s additions creates a larger aural footprint of the audience and, like the touch of reverb added to the Newport tapes overall, allows a sense of place to resonate. The aggregation of shouts, yells, murmurs, and cries cultivates a particular idea of being “there,” as being somewhere though not in the audience. Avakian produced an ideal place of listening specifically made for consumers at home with a stereo.

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84 Novak, Japnoise, 53.
86 For more on the constructed, yet deeply felt quality of presence and liveness on jazz recordings see: David Ake, Jazz Matters: Sound, Place, and Time since Bebop (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), 45–48.
Conclusion

Reproductions of so-called live jazz have existed since the music’s earliest days in the form of radio broadcasts, some from remote locations such as nightclubs and concert halls. The adoption of the LP in combination with emergent electromagnetic tape capabilities made these live moments repeatable and portable in new ways—the live recording became a viable commercial genre. During the ensuing adjustment period, record industry executives, producers, engineers, and musicians all had to negotiate what it meant to put such live moments on record. This network of creative individuals had to decide what kind of sounds, images, and design characteristics were necessary to make a sounded object feel live. Liveness on record, to put it another way, became a valued commodity that necessitated research and development.

During this period of experimentation, tape recording made it possible to splice, cut, insert, overdub, and manipulate recordings in different ways. As more options emerged, musical time came to have a new commercial value. Onstage performance became more reproducible outside of the studio, which pushed the limits of what it meant to record jazz. It became feasible to record and produce lengthy performances such as a twenty-seven chorus solo by Paul Gonsalves at the Newport Jazz Festival. This control over time in the studio, however, also created a need for specialists and expert technicians;

it took valuable studio resources in order to convert performance time into record time.\textsuperscript{88} For \textit{Ellington at Newport}, Avakian leveraged these new possibilities of time manipulation and onsite commercial recording to reproduce the feeling and ambience of a live event of historical import. Guided by an approach to record making that privileges sonic realism, he created a viable LP from flawed tapes. That is, this history on record would simply not exist without manipulative techniques of audio production.

The site of Ellington’s celebrated performance should not be overlooked. From its inception, the Newport Festival attempted to legitimize jazz by attaching itself to elite Northeastern sensibilities and making the music into a symbol of sophistication and democratic public culture.\textsuperscript{89} Similar to Prestige Records in the early-1950s, the Newport Festival understood jazz through a cultural lens that marginalized African American musicians even as it celebrated their musical achievements. Festival director George Wein and Columbia Records played their part, as did George Avakian through his corrective techniques of audio production. The \textit{Ellington at Newport} LP, which contains an acclaimed moment of blues improvisation matched with a newly composed Ellington “suite,” is a product of an aesthetic discourse of racial uplift.

Jazz records are as seductive as they are deceptive: seductive because they reproduce, repeat, and replay the values of spontaneity, individuality, and mastery at the center of the jazz aesthetic; deceptive because they present their contents as

\textsuperscript{88} For more on how sound mixing moved from technical craft to artistic practice, see: Edward R. Kealy, “From Craft to Art: The Case of Sound Mixers and Popular Music,” \textit{Work and Occupations} 6, no. 1 (1979).
\textsuperscript{89} I take the idea of democratic public culture as it relates to the Newport Jazz Festival from: Gennari, \textit{Blowin’ Hot and Cool}, 210.
uninterrupted performances. Live records allow contemporary listeners to seemingly eavesdrop on the lost moments of history, purposely misdirecting from the multi-layered relationship between performance and its recorded Other. With this aural slip of the hand, the past is always in a state of becoming through listening. The 1956 Ellington at Newport LP assumes a date, a location, and a specific performance while at the same time bringing that moment to absent ears. Sound production helps to bridge the divide between here/now and there/then, whether through equalization, added crowd noise, or spliced-in corrections. These practices employ creativity, imagination, and expertise situated within overlapping, conflicting, and shifting approaches to rendering the live event in sound.

Chapter 2 Discography: Capturing and Producing Festival Stages, Studio Jam Sessions, and Lengthy Improvisations


———. *At the Bal Masque.* Columbia CL 1282. LP (12in) 1959.


Chapter 3

Performing Jazz, Performing Democracy:
The Ambassadorial LPs of Dizzy Gillespie

In 1956, the US State Department sent trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie and a big band to the Near East and South America to promote democracy and fight communist sympathies abroad. This tour marked the first time the State Department invited a jazz ensemble, or any musical group led by an African American, to participate. From March to May 1956 the ensemble traveled to Iran, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia. After returning to the United States for a few weeks, the band toured South America from July to August, performing in Ecuador, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil. Gillespie’s ambassadorial big band performed over one hundred concerts in eleven countries. In doing so, he became the first official jazz ambassador.

During the year after the tours, record label owner and producer Norman Granz issued two LPs featuring Gillespie’s ambassadorial ensemble. The LPs portray jazz as democracy enacted in sound. Their titles, *World Statesman* (1956) and *Dizzy in Greece* (1957), situate Gillespie in an official role for the nation-state or at a specific location of political relevance at the time. Other elements of the records’ production and design
accentuate this construal. The liner notes, written by acclaimed jazz researcher Marshall Stearns, recount anecdotes from local newspapers and give brief musical descriptions that relate the LPs’ content directly to the band’s tour performances. Stearns, for example, presents *World Statesman* as the “first half” of a Gillespie tour concert and describes several pieces as “encores.” Similarly, *Dizzy in Greece* includes a description of “Hey Pete” as the beginning of “the concert.” Several surviving programs from the Near East tour reveal that, despite their claims of representation from abroad, the LPs contain only a small cross section of the repertory Gillespie and his band played during their foreign tours. Moreover, the records omit Gillespie’s humorous interactions with band members and the audience that were a regular part of the band’s onstage performance, as concurrent live recordings clearly evince.

This chapter engages with these LPs to consider how the jazz ambassadors program circulated among broad sections of the US population. Unlike the tour concerts, which served a specific political purpose for international audiences, Granz aurally and visually designed the recordings so that a mainstream and middle-class audience in the United States might imagine jazz standing for the nation’s political ideals. My focus on Gillespie’s ambassadorial LPs adds to a body of scholarship that highlights how Gillespie’s creativity on and off the bandstand helped him to negotiate the shifting political landscape during this time. Because this literature does not consider how sonic technologies engaged with national debates about race and jazz, it fails to understand the significant role that

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commercial record making had in placing jazz within the logic of US democracy. I argue that the two LPs were never meant to document the tours with veracity; rather they were objects intended to address domestic debates about the place of jazz in 1950s US culture. This perspective reveals how advocates such as Gillespie, Granz, and Stearns leveraged the political moment to imagine a future for the music.

Performing Jazz, Performing Democracy

By design, the jazz ambassadors program focused on regions that had strategic value to the political agendas of the United States. From 1945 to 1960, over forty countries containing roughly a quarter of the world’s population (about 800 million people) gained independence. These former colonial states became contested Cold War battlegrounds as

2 In their studies of the jazz ambassadors program, historians Penny Von Eschen and Lisa Davenport use Gillespie as a catalyst for discussion about the US approaches to worldwide representations of Jim Crow during a crucial time of political upheaval on a worldwide stage. Despite their excellent analysis of the broader historical significance of jazz coming to speak for the United States abroad, this work does not consider the circulation of Gillespie’s ambassadorial music from the perspective of the jazz recording industry. Cultural theorist Richard Iton similarly places Gillespie’s jazz ambassador tours within the context of other black entertainers navigating similar political terrain. In tracing the relationship between national politics and black popular culture, Iton reveals how artists were able to cross social boundaries through their popular appeal. Closely aligned with Iton in her approach, ethnomusicologist Ingrid Monson frames the jazz tours in a musico-political trajectory, detailing how jazz musicians joined struggles for social equality and civil rights. Through detailed archival analysis, she underlines how the ensuing battles over the tour’s finances and the response from conservative congressional members connected to national conversations surrounding race relations. Both Iton and Monson acknowledge the vital role of technology in popular representations of jazz, though Gillespie’s recordings are not a subject of analysis or discussion. See: Penny Von Eschen, Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Lisa E. Davenport, Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009); Ingrid Monson, Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call out to Jazz and Africa (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Richard Iton, In Search of the Black Fantastic: Politics and Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
the United States and Soviet Union fought for political dominance. During this fight, the USSR’s leaders realized that Jim Crow laws hurt the reputation of the United States in these decolonized states. As early as 1946, Soviet propaganda included reports about lynchings and poor labor conditions in the Southern US. Senator William Benton warned Congress in 1950 that US race relations would hurt the country's efforts in many of the most critical areas of the Cold War, including Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. It was no coincidence that the first State Department tours occurred in these regions.

The inherent contradictions of sustaining Jim Crow policies while self-identifying as “leaders of the free world” presented a problem for the US. Since it could not deny the realities of domestic discrimination, the State Department began emphasizing the moral imperative of democracy. It adopted a narrative that outlined a teleological future: the democratic process, however slow, would peacefully lead towards social justice and racial equality.

The fight with the Soviet Union to gain political influence within decolonized states led to aggressive anti-communist domestic policies within the United States, particularly those created by Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy. Underwritten by fear of communism, such policies endangered prominent black intellectuals with left-leaning ideals who publically criticized the treatment of African Americans during their travels

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5 Ibid., 12-13.
abroad. In an effort to control the international circulation of narratives about race relations within the United States, the State Department revoked passports of US-born activists such as Paul Robeson and W.E.B. Du Bois, whose actions contradicted the state-sanctioned narrative of racial progress. At the same time, the FBI placed other African American artists under surveillance, including Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Josephine Baker, and Louis Armstrong.  

In response, many African American activists and community leaders began distancing themselves from figures like Robeson and Du Bois in order to avoid the negative attention of the US government. The NAACP’s executive secretary Walter White, Council on African Affairs founding member Max Yergan, and Senator Adam Clayton Powell Jr., for example, rebuked communism while they simultaneously denounced racial violence and institutional inequality on moral grounds, placing their struggle in terms that fit within the language and logic of US democracy. The mission statement of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, written in 1957, declared their desires to “redeem the soul America.” In this way, Cold War civil rights extended beyond tangible political actions. Adopting terms of morality in the fight against social injustice, as historian Waldo E. Martin argues, allowed African American leaders to promote a notion of America built around diversity, complexity, and pluralism rather than one built around

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6 Von Eschen, Race against Empire, 2–3; Dudziak, Cold War Civil Rights, 66–68.
7 Dudziak, Cold War Civil Rights, 56, 67.
white dominant culture. As a result, emerging debates about black identity across different social strata increasingly focused on the degrees of overlap and difference between American and African American cultures.

At the same time, the US State Department increased the visibility of African Americans by sending distinguished authors, athletes, journalists, and other intellectuals abroad on missions of cultural exchange. This included trips in the early 1950s by author J. Saunders Redding, journalist Carl T. Rowan, high jumper Gilbert Cruter, and the Harlem Globetrotters. The State Department additionally began placing African Americans in their embassies across the world and allowed prominent figures, like attorney Edith Sampson, to speak at public events. Senator Adam Clayton Powell, one of the few black congressmen, succinctly summarized this strategy when he told President Eisenhower in 1955 that “one dark face from the US is as much value as millions of dollars in economic aid.”

That same year, Powell also persuaded Eisenhower that jazz could be useful in fighting Soviet propaganda abroad. Though many Congress members considered jazz a low-brow musical form, it had become undeniably popular in the Eastern Bloc, primarily through Willis Conover’s Music USA radio show on the Voice of America network

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9 Waldo E. Martin, *No Coward Soldiers: Black Cultural Politics and Postwar America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 31, 42–43. Martin also points out that there was substantial disagreement amongst the African American population about what exactly constituted black culture(s) and how that related to US culture writ large.

10 Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 148, 197. For more detailed information about the bills approved by Congress for the cultural exchange program, see Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 111–12.


12 Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 148. Powell had close ties to the jazz scene through of his wife, pianist Hazel Scott.
(VOA). Conover believed that jazz resembled western democracy in several respects: “Jazz is a cross between total discipline and total anarchy. The musicians agree on tempo, key, and chord structure but beyond this everyone is free to express himself. This is jazz. And this is America. . . . [People] love jazz because they love freedom.”

Unlike music directly emerging from the Western concert tradition, jazz was a singular product of the United States that could not be replicated by the Soviet Union. Jazz was, as Vice Consul Ernest A. Nagy said, “one of the country’s outstanding contribution[s] to the art forms of the world and perhaps our most popular export.” The jazz ambassadors tour began through what came to be known as the Cultural Exchange Program.

The American National Theater Academy (ANTA) oversaw the evaluation and selection of participants for the Cultural Exchange Program. With little knowledge about

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13 Music USA, which played in primetime slots before and after the evening news, dedicated the first of its two-hour show to popular music and the second one to jazz. Conover launched the show on January 6, 1955. Penny Von Eschen estimates that the show reached about 30 million people in 80 countries in 1955 and that, a decade later, this number increased to nearly 100 million people. Shows were recorded in Washington, DC, and then broadcast a month later from VOA stations. Von Eschen, Satchmo Blows up the World, 14.


15 Ibid., 22.

16 Qtd. in: Davenport, Jazz Diplomacy, 45. References to jazz as a cultural and artistic “export” also appear in several other news sources during the mid-1950s, including Time magazine, which called jazz a “valuable exportable US commodity.” See: “Music: Jazz around the World,” Time, 25 June 1956.

17 In August of 1954, Congress authorized the President’s emergency fund for Participation in International Affairs. This funding source was made permanent in 1956 by the International Cultural Exchange and Trade Fair Participation Act (PL-806), later renamed the President’s Special International Program for Participation in Internal Affairs, which was also known as the Cultural Presentations Program. See: Davenport, Jazz Diplomacy, 39.
jazz, ANTA’s music advisory panel sought the expertise of noted jazz scholar Marshall Stearns, who recommended Gillespie along with several other musicians.\footnote{After attending several meetings of the advisory panel at the end of 1955, Stearns was asked to become a permanent member in January 1956. Typed letter to Stearns from H. Alwyn Inness, Vice Chairman, 24 January 1956, box 11, folder 28, 1956 Dizzy Gillespie Tour of the Near East, correspondence, The Marshall Winslow Stearns Collection (MC 030), Rutgers University Libraries, Institute of Jazz Studies. Hereafter, I cite this collection as: Stearns Collection, IJS. Stearns initially named Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, and Stan Kenton as top choices. The panel deemed their top choice, Armstrong, too expensive. Their second and third choices—Ellington and Basie—refused to fly, leaving Gillespie as the panel’s recommended artist. For more, as well as a detailed listing of the panel see: Monson, \textit{Freedom Sounds}, 112–14.} Gillespie’s dynamic ability and charismatic personality made him an ideal choice, though some in Washington still had concerns about sending jazz overseas. In a letter dated 30 January 1956, ANTA’s general manager Robert C. Schnitzer asked Stearns to accompany Gillespie’s band, a move that reinforced the racialized power dynamic that surrounded the program as a whole. “Every precaution,” Schnitzer wrote, “must be taken to assure that America’s popular music is presented in such a way as to achieve the best results for our national prestige.” He continued: “We would also depend upon you to keep an eye on Dizzy’s programs in order to see that he maintains the standards that have been set for them.”\footnote{Typed Letter to Stearns from Robert C. Schnitzer, General Manager of ANTA, 30 January 1956, box 11, folder 28, 1956 Dizzy Gillespie Tour of the Near East, Correspondence, Stearns Collection, IJS.} It is not by coincidence that ANTA solicited a white, male academic to make jazz legible to cultural elites and to oversee a program intended to combat communist propaganda about racial inequality within the United States.

Asking a black jazz musician to represent America abroad was a first, and not without risk for Gillespie and his fellow musicians. Given the treatment of Robeson, Du
Bois, and others, the band members had to balance any opinions about the state of civil liberties for African Americans with their support for democracy. While on tour, Gillespie both praised the progress in US race relations and spoke openly about Emmett Till, whose gruesome murder in 1955 made tangible the violent realities of African American life. According to Jet magazine, local populations closely questioned Gillespie about Till’s murder as well as Atherine Lucy, the first black student to attend (and be unjustly expelled from) the University of Alabama.\(^{20}\) Gillespie, in Richard Iton’s characterization, faced the challenge of having to be black enough for foreign audiences but not so black as to threaten the broader missions of the State Department.\(^{21}\)

Gillespie states in his autobiography that he “wasn’t going over to apologize for the racist policies of America,” while also pridefully acknowledging the “‘American assortment’ of blacks, whites, males, females, Jews, and Gentiles in the band.”\(^{22}\) The presence of a racially mixed and gender-inclusive band on stage purposefully performed the narrative of progress pushed by the State Department. Gillespie recalled how the local people “could see it wasn’t as intense [as they had been led to believe] because we had white boys and I was the leader of the band.” He continues:

\(^{20}\) “Dizzy Gillespie, Nat Cole Entertain President,” Jet, 7 June 1956. Like other magazines such as Tan, Sepia, and Ebony, Jet was generally thought of as vehicles that projected middle-class black values, emphasizing black achievement and other forms of cultural production generally ignored by the mainstream, white press.

\(^{21}\) Iton, Black Fantastic, 48.

\(^{22}\) Dizzy Gillespie and Al Fraser, To Be, or Not . . . To Bop (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979), 414. The band included trombonist Melba Liston and, for the Near East tour, vocalist Dottie Saulters. The tours also gave him the opportunity to once again lead a big band, something he had unsuccessfully attempted several times in the 1940s. For musicians like Gillespie who grew up in the big band era, fronting such a large ensemble was an enormous sign of status, made all the more powerful with the support of the US government.
That was strange to them because they’d heard about blacks being lynched and burned, and here I come with half whites and blacks and a girl playing in the band. And everybody seemed to be getting along fine. So I didn’t try to hide anything. I said, “Yeah, there it is. We have our problems but we’re still working on it. I’m the leader of this band, and those white guys are working for me. That’s a helluva thing. A hundred years ago, our ancestors were slaves, and today we’re scuffling with this problem, but I’m sure it’s gonna be straightened out some day. I probably won’t see it, completely, the eradication of racial prejudice in the United States, but it will be eliminated.\footnote{Ibid., 421.}

In this passage, Gillespie adopts language at the heart of the State Department’s Cultural Exchange Program by tying his activities to a narrative of economic progress and a future without prejudice. Jazz was, from his perspective, a tool for goodwill that could “bring people together,” as Gillespie also writes.\footnote{Ibid., 414.} Significantly, Gillespie also articulated a vision of the United States that was hybrid, mixed, and diverse, a position African American community leaders and public figures expressed at the time. On stage, this translated into skillful performances that entertained and educated through a combination of humor, wit, and musical displays of virtuosity.

**Gillespie’s Ambassadorial LPs and the Concert Tours**

Reports of Gillespie’s activities abroad appeared in a wide array of print media. Jazz periodicals such as *Down Beat* and *Metronome* followed the tours closely, beginning with the official announcement from the State Department in November 1955. Coverage also appeared in the major newspapers of New York, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, and San Francisco, in addition to media that catered specifically to African Americans.
Americans. This included newspapers such as the Pittsburgh Courier, New York Amsterdam News, and Arkansas State Press, as well as magazines like Hue and Jet. Between April 1956 and July 1957, Esquire, Saturday Review, Variety, Newsweek, and Time—magazines that targeted an educated, middle class audience—similarly published articles about this new, ambassadorial role for jazz.²⁵

This exposure led to numerous performance opportunities for Gillespie’s ensemble. Between their return from the Near East and their trip to South America in the summer of 1956, the band performed in New York City at Birdland and the Apollo Theater, at the White House for President Eisenhower, at a civil rights rally in Detroit, Michigan, and on Edward Murrow’s Person to Person TV show.²⁶ From the Apollo to the White House, and from television to print media, Gillespie’s role as a cultural ambassador circulated through all layers of US culture and his music was in high demand with audiences on both sides of the color line.

Seeking to take advantage this publicity, Gillespie’s record label, Norgran, issued the first of two LPs featuring the State Department band at the end of 1956.²⁷ Recorded in a single session on June 6, 1956 in a New York studio, World Statesman featured ten tracks

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²⁵ See the 1956 and 1957 folders: Dizzy Gillespie, Newspaper Clippings, Rutgers University Libraries, Institute of Jazz Studies. Hereafter cited as Gillespie Clippings, IJS.
²⁷ Specific release dates are difficult to track since discographies privilege session dates. The LP is first mentioned in a December 1956 issue of Down Beat, see: Nat Hentoff, “World Statesman (Review),” Down Beat, 26 December 1956, 30.
of the band’s material (see Table 3). Nat Hentoff gave a positive review in *Down Beat*, though he criticized Melba Liston’s arrangements and what he felt was subpar recording quality. “The rest,” Hentoff writes, “are funky swingers with the band blowing a collective storm that largely makes up in heat for occasional lack of subtle precision. But the main asset is Gillespie, whose horn is masterly.” World Statesman appeared as a national best seller four times between March and June 1957, though never breaking into the top ten.

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<td>Dizzy’s Business</td>
<td>Night In Tunisia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica’s Day</td>
<td>Stella By Starlight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour De Force</td>
<td>The Champ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Can’t Get Started</td>
<td>My Reverie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doodlin’</td>
<td>Dizzy’s Blues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Track listing by side, *World Statesman*

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28 There is discographical discrepancy about the studio dates that produced the ambassadorial LPs. Many discographies list three possible dates: May 18, May 19, and June 6. Biographer Alyn Shipton quotes Gillespie as making “seventeen sides” in one session that produced material for both LPs but dismisses this account as improbable based on studio sheets from “Verve’s archives.” Alyn Shipton, *Groovin’ High: The Life of Dizzy Gillespie* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 285–86. The May 18 and 19 studio dates, however, seem unlikely based on official State Department records, which place the band in Greece between May 12–21. Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 115. Nat Hentoff’s review that World Statesman describes the LP as being “made by the big band in a nonstop, 90-minute session shortly after its return from Greece.” See: Hentoff, “World Statesman (Review).”

29 Hentoff, “World Statesman (Review).”

Label owner Norman Granz issued the second ambassadorial LP, *Dizzy in Greece*, at the end of 1957 on his Verve label, augmented by several tracks from another studio date in April 1957 (see Table 4).³ Down Beat’s Don Gold gave the LP four out of five stars, describing Gillespie as “the epitome of creative jazz, as far as I’m concerned, and his work here glows with warmth and excitement.” Gold notes the “incomparable drive” of the band and extols the “fascinating” arrangements as “the best efforts of some of jazz’ best writers.” Though he recommends this album as one “worth owning and hearing often,” he does remark that there is “no evidence that an audience is present for this concert performance, in Greece or anywhere else.”³² Despite the positive review, *Dizzy in Greece* never appeared on the best selling jazz charts in 1957 or 1958.

Table 4: Track listing by side, *Dizzy in Greece*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Side 1</th>
<th>Side 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hey Pete!</td>
<td>Cool Breeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesterdays</td>
<td>School Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin Tin Déo</td>
<td>That’s All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groovin’ For Nat</td>
<td>Stablemates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie’s Dance</td>
<td>Groovin’ High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the arrangements showcase individual (and often virtuosic) improvisations and feature complex melodies, intricate harmonies, and swift tempos. The pieces infused

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³ *Dizzy in Greece* came out roughly a year after *World Statesman*. Verve issued the other tracks recorded during the April 1957 session on *Birks’ Works* (1957), another LP under Gillespie’s name.
³² Don Gold, “Dizzy Gillespie: *Dizzy in Greece* (Review),” *Down Beat*, 28 November 1957, 28–29. He also writes: “The title of this LP seems to be justification for use of the cover photo, of Gillespie in Greek garb.”
these elements with typical gestures of the big band style: call-and-response figures between the brass and reed sections, melodies harmonized in four or five parts, full-band interludes between solos, and a chorus of through-composed material arranged for the entire ensemble, or what is usually referred to as an “arranger’s” or “shout” chorus. The form varied little from piece to piece, with each track lasting between two and a half and six minutes. This usually meant an eight to twelve-measure introduction, the melody orchestrated for a few soloists or the entire band, improvised solos (with band interludes), a shout chorus, and a restatement of the melody. Like bebop, the repertoire was a mixture of newly composed music and arrangements of standards from the Great American songbook. Gillespie’s tendency for humor and parody can also be heard in the band’s novelty compositions, “School Days” and “Hey Pete!”

Visually, the LPs connect these recordings to Gillespie’s ambassadorial tours in several ways. The titles portray Gillespie either as an official of the nation-state or place him in a location performing in his official capacity. World Statesman displays Gillespie’s silhouette accentuated by his iconic trumpet bell, unconventionally bent upward at a 45-degree angle. A plumed European knight helmet lies at his feet. On the cover of Dizzy in Greece, Gillespie leans against a Greek temple pillar dressed in white fustanella, the traditional men’s costume of Greece. The thick-rimmed sunglasses subtly reference Gillespie’s hipster look from the 1940s and present a striking contrast to his formal dress (Figures 9 and 10).
The largely unadorned back covers feature Marshall Stearns’s liner notes, both of which follow a similar organizational pattern. The notes begin by recounting the band’s general activities in the Near East through anecdotes and reports from local newspapers, eventually leading to brief descriptions of each piece on the record. Both equate the LPs’ contents to the concert tours. “This album,” Stearns writes on *World Statesman*, “furnishes a sampling—volume two is yet to come—of the first half of the concert with Gillespie at his all-time best.” He classifies two pieces as “encores” and eventually concludes: “So ends the first album and the first half of the concert.” The notes on *Dizzy in Greece* take a similar approach, beginning: “This is the second album (the first was *Dizzy Gillespie:*
World Statesman) of the music that piled up friends and momentum as it swung through the Middle East.”33 To introduce his discussion of the music, Stearns writes, “The concert begins with the novelty HEY PETE, a Quincy Jones arrangement of the blues.”

Several surviving programs from the Near East tour reveal that the LPs contain only a portion of the actual concert repertoire. There were two parts to the tour concerts (Figure 11). 34 The first half of the concert featured a succession of performances intended to present an overview of jazz’s historical development.35 The band’s vocalists, who also did not appear on the LPs, sang African American spirituals and swing-era vocal numbers like “Seems Like She Just Don’t Care” and “Gimme a Little Kiss.” Gillespie and drummer Charlie Persip demonstrated “African drum rhythms,” and the ensemble played through various blues and early jazz styles.36 Such examples included a Dixieland rendition of “When the Saints Go Marching In” and several note-for-note transcriptions of pieces from

33 Stearns, liner notes to World Statesman. Notice also that both records mention the other despite being issued a year apart.
34 Concert Program (Greece), box 24, folder 22, Program and Notes, 1956 Dizzy Gillespie Tour of the Near East, Stearns Collection, IJS. Also see: “Dizzy Gillespie and His Orchestra: Program,” typed document, box 24, folder 22, “1956 Dizzy Gillespie Tour of the Near East Programs and Notes,” Stearns Collection, IJS. The 2 May 1956 issue of Down Beat gives a similar account, see: “History of Jazz Big Feature of Gillespie Overseas Tour,” 9. In the scholarly literature about Gillespie’s tours, only Monson mentions the content of the band’s performances, though there is little analysis of how history functions within these performances. Monson, Freedom Sounds, 115-16.
35 Concert Program (Greece), Stearns Collection, IJS. This concert format was also described in the jazz press. See: “History of Jazz Big Feature of Gillespie Overseas Tour.”
36 Since no commercially available recordings of the band’s historical re-enactments exist, we cannot know with specificity what Persip and Gillespie actually played to represent African drum rhythms. Their demonstration was likely a variant of West African drumming styles that Gillespie had adopted into his playing via his interest in Afro-Cuban music. Gillespie’s interest in Afro-Latin music began in the late-1940s with his collaborations with Cuban percussionist Chano Pozo. For more on the cultural politics of Gillespie’s Afro-Cuban styles, see: Jairo Moreno, “Bauza-Gillespie-Latin/Jazz: Difference, Modernity, and the Black Caribbean,” The South Atlantic Quarterly 103, no. 1 (2004).
the swing bands of Jimmy Lunceford, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, and Count Basie.37 “Groovin’ High” concluded the concert’s first half as an example of the bebop style that Gillespie had helped make famous. The second half of the concert highlighted the band’s modern repertoire and included several Gillespie originals: “Cool Breeze,” “The Champ,” and “A Night in Tunisia.” In South America, the band also played several newly composed arrangements in Gillespie’s Afro-Cuban jazz style, including “Manteca” and “Tin Tin Deo.”38 In total, the tour concerts presented a wide variety of styles and ensemble configurations.

37 Gillespie’s historical arrangements were transcribed from the recordings of famous big bands. Writing to Down Beat in 1956, Stearns praised such historical reenactments as having “zest and fidelity.” Marshall Stearns, “Turkey Resounds, Reacts to Dizzy Gillespie Band,” Down Beat, 27 June 1956, 16.
38 Though I have not been able to locate surviving programs from South America, several recordings of Gillespie’s tour in that region survive and include these songs (though not necessarily in concert order). See: Dizzy in South America Official U.S. State Department Tour, 1956: Volume 1 (1999); Dizzy in South America Official U.S. State Department Tour, 1956: Volume 2 (1999); Dizzy in South America: Volume 3 (2001).
These programming decisions served several purposes. Primarily, the “historical recapitulation of jazz,” as Nat Hentoff called it, educated audiences that were likely unfamiliar with the music and its history.\textsuperscript{39} Presenting the wide variety of sub-styles and

\textsuperscript{39} Hentoff, “Dizzy Gillespie Orchestra: Birdland, New York.” \textit{As Down Beat} reported in May 1956, Gillespie did this to “both demonstrate the evolution of big band and jazz and also summarize several significant jazz trumpet styles.” See: “History of Jazz Big Feature of Gillespie Overseas Tour.”
reenacting historical big band charts told a musical story that started with jazz’s earliest roots and arrived at Gillespie’s modern style. Though well-known artists and established styles figure prominently in everyday jazz performance, the explicit recreation of earlier styles was unusual in the mid-1950s. This concert organization taught audiences different aspects of the music in an easily digestible narrative of progress and arrival.

A bootlegged recording of “Groovin’ High” from the South American tour illustrates how the band brought jazz history into the performatve present. The ambassadorial band’s arrangement pays tribute to Gillespie’s bebop collaboration with Charlie Parker: the melodic content of the ensemble tags, solo transitions, and coda material, as well as the orchestration of the melody—unison trumpet and alto saxophone—originate from

An April article in the New York Amsterdam News similarly described how the band would “present a complete history of American Jazz from Blues to Modern.” Standalone Photo, New York Amsterdam News, 7 April 1956, 16.

The emulation of historical styles occurs throughout a jazz musician’s career, from early training to professional performance; this practice often involves referencing musical recordings of famous jazz artists. See: Paul Berliner, Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 64–65, 101–9, 237–38.

My reading of the performatve present is influenced by Diana Taylor’s understanding of the “historically charged” present of live performance. See: Diana Taylor, The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 143. Gillespie’s friend and record producer Dave Usher accompanied the band through South America and recorded several concerts, twenty-eight tracks of which Consolidated Artist Productions released on three CDs in 1999. Although these discs have neither specific dates and locations nor any indication of how the track order was selected, the musical remains consistent with several other live recordings of Gillespie’s band from the same time period, including a Verve release of the band at the 1957 Newport Jazz Festival. As such, these recordings give a sense of how Gillespie’s band likely sounded during their tours. Usher was Gillespie’s partner when the two tried to establish Dee Gee records in the early-1950s. The label folded soon after, though Usher went on to become a producer at Argo (a subsidiary of Chess) in the 1960s. He was a CEO at Consolidated Artist Productions, the company that released Gillespie’s 1956 South American concert tapes. Gillespie biographer Donald Maggin reports that these recordings were done on Gillespie’s Ampex 600 tape recorder and that he initially wanted to sell the tapes to Granz. Maggin, Dizzy, 283–84.
Gillespie and Parker’s 1945 recording. Gillespie based the harmony of “Groovin’ High” on a well-known standard from the 1920s titled “Whispering.” To make this historical connection aurally explicit, the saxophone section overlaid the original melody of “Whispering” (played in unison) onto Gillespie’s composition (beginning at 0:30). Though bebop musicians often employed the harmony of songbook standards in this way, it was unusual to perform the original and newly composed melodies simultaneously. Further, the concert program referenced this practice by expanding the title to “Groovin’ High ne [sic] Whispering.”

In his demonstration of New Orleans jazz, Gillespie parodied the iconic stylings of Louis Armstrong. The band’s version of “I’m Confessin’” closely followed a 1952 recording called “Pop’s Confessin’” in which Gillespie imitates Armstrong’s vocal and trumpet style. During the onstage introduction and vocal scat breaks of the South American performance, Gillespie expertly mimics Armstrong’s voice. For example, when Gillespie sings the word “but” he places a strong attack on the “B” in an Armstrong-like gesture

43 “Whispering” was made famous by bandleader Paul Whiteman. The practice of composing new melodies over the chord progressions of well-known standards was common for bebop musicians. Among other things, it allowed musicians to improvise over the harmony of standards without paying royalties. Famous examples include Tadd Dameron’s “Hot House” (“What is This Thing Called Love”), Miles Davis’s “Dig” (Sweet Georgia Brown”) and “Donna Lee” (“Back Home in Indiana”), Charlie Parker’s “Yardbird Suite” (“Rosetta”), and any number of songs composed over the chord progression of George Gershwin’s “I Got Rhythm.” Other parts of Gillespie’s repertoire derived from existing material, including two Melba Liston arrangements. She based “Annie’s Dance” on the third movement of Edvard Grieg’s Peer Gynt Suite no. 1 op 46. Leonard Feather, “This Melba Is a Peach,” Down Beat, 16 September 1956, 16. Liston’s “My Reverie” was based on a theme composed by Claude Debussy. Stearns, liner notes to World Statesman.
44 Gillespie, Dizzy in South America, Volume 2. “I’m Confessin’” was first made famous by pianist Fats Waller.
(0:54). At other points, Gillespie imitates the elder trumpeter’s propensity to end phrases with a long, sung “mmmmm” (0:17). Gillespie’s trumpet style also pays tribute through half valve attacks, shakes at the ends of phrases, extended high notes, and quotations of the song’s melody. Fast bebop lines are notably absent. With its humor and skill, the performance elicits laughter and strong applause from the audience.45

The song concludes with a lengthy call and response between soloist and band. Gillespie executes a series of rising high notes (2:15):

Gillespie: Ab-Ab-C-Ab-C  
Gillespie: Ab-C-C#-A-C#  
Gillespie: A-C#-D-Bb-D

\[ \text{Snare and bass drum hit . . . “Higher!”} \]

At this point, the melodic ascent ends and Gillespie holds his high D. Responding to another call for “higher,” he whistles the next note in the series; the audience laughs and cheers in response. Still in character, Gillespie starts chanting: “Gotta get one of those high Cs with the red beans and rice” and “high C, let’s see, let’s see where the high C is. Mmmmm” (2:52). This continues until the piano player answers a particularly loud outburst of “AHHHH” from Gillespie by playing the target, one step above Gillespie’s last played note (3:32). After a few more moments of chatter, Gillespie asks the band: “You ready boys? Go ahead.” Another band member responds with, “Are you ready?” and

\[ \text{Snare and bass drum hit . . . “Higher!”}^{46} \]

45 Two or many examples occur near the beginning of the track, at 0:17 and 0:39.
46 The pitches I’ve listed here are as they sound (in concert pitch) on the recording.
Gillespie nearly breaks character before repeating his question. A final Ab-Ab-Db releases the built up tension and Gillespie reclaims his regular stage voice to announce the next tune.

His intelligence as a comedian and exuberant, onstage charisma were major reasons that the musical advisory panel recommended Gillespie to the State Department in 1956. With roots in the slapstick comedy of vaudeville, this jokester persona was an extension of the theatricality of other bandleaders such as Cab Calloway, who employed Gillespie between 1939 and 1941. Such onstage antics were, in fact, what gave Gillespie the nickname “Dizzy” during his time in the Frankie Fairfax band in the mid-1930s. Gillespie’s expertly crafted versioning of Armstrong brought levity to a performance founded on worldwide contestations over democracy and communism. As such, his gags and musical humor during the tours were of great value.

By matching novelty tunes, musical gags, and jokes with high-level musicianship, Gillespie offered an accessible and engaging performance to an audience unfamiliar with jazz. Several newspaper and magazine articles remarked on the overwhelming audience response. The Pittsburgh Courier, for example, characterized the reactions in Abadan, Iran as a “miracle” when the audience began “awkwardly” clapping along. “Soon,” the article

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47 Monson, Freedom Sounds, 113. In a July 11, 1956 review of the band’s performance in New York, Down Beat writer Nat Hentoff remarked that part of Gillespie’s strength is his ability to combine “authority with good humor” while fronting the band. He goes on: “His unquenchable wit is still in welcome evidence in the introduction and often during the numbers, but now the wit is combined with the emotional and technical range that the Gillespie trumpet is so valuably capable of, and the result is some of the most rewarding Gillespie of his career.” Hentoff, “Dizzy Gillespie Orchestra: Birdland, New York.”
continues, “whistles and screams reached the stage.” Stearns similarly reported that in Aleppo, Syria, some audience members would yell strange phrases like “rock it and roll it” while others would “clap on the wrong beat, trying to figure out the proper response.” In Ankara, Turkey, the band was “drowned out by the roar of the audience” that was “a solid wall of sound.” Photos from the Near East tour display large, over-packed concert halls with people visibly yelling, whistling, and dancing in the aisles.

Gillespie’s skill and flexibility exhibited an authority over the concert hall and allowed him to exemplify the ideals of US democracy on stage. Stearns describes how the “pandemonium” of the audience “ground to a halt only when the band started the Turkish national anthem followed by the Star Spangled Banner.” The New York Amsterdam News and the Pittsburgh Courier similarly reported on the positive reaction to the band’s

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49 Marshall Stearns, “Dizzy’s Troupe Casts Spell over Mideast Audiences,” Down Beat, 17 June 1956, 16; Stearns, “Turkey Resounds, Reacts to Dizzy Gillespie Band.” The articles also included several lengthy passages from alto saxophonist Phil Woods, who similarly comments on their audiences’ enthusiasm. Elsewhere, Stearns writes that in Dacca the audience “sat wide-eyed on the edge of their chairs at the first concert, and applauded politely as if the noise might interfere with the strange and wonderful music. By the third concert, however, they were participating fully—clapping on the right beat, yelling, and whistling like any college crowd at home.” Marshall Stearns, “Is Jazz Good Propaganda? The Dizzy Gillespie Tour,” Saturday Review, 14 July 1956, 29.
50 Stearns, “Dizzy’s Troupe Casts Spell over Mideast Audiences,” 17.
51 Concert photos, box 15, folder 10, Dizzy Gillespie Orchestra Tour of the Near East, US Dept of State Istanbul/Athens crowds, Street Scenes, Stearns Collection, IJS.
52 Here, I understand performance as both the process of making music on stage and as a means of transmitting cultural knowledge, memory, and citizenship through embodied action. See: Taylor, Archive and the Repertoire, xvi, 2–3, 20–21.
53 Stearns, “Turkey Resounds, Reacts to Dizzy Gillespie Band.” The liner notes to World Statesman say this: “In other cities, where jazz was new but seriously considered, the band’s modern style converted conservatory-trained composers on the spot. By the end of the concert, a quick encore of the current country’s national anthem was necessary to restore order.” Stearns, liner notes to World Statesman.
performance of the Iranian national anthem. Together, these national anthems dually performed a notion of unity, a sentiment further accentuated by the bilingual programs. Writing for *Down Beat*, Stearns expressed the “pleased confusion caused by the fact that there are white as well as colored musicians in the band.” He also characterized the reactions of people across a wide spectrum of age, ethnicity, and nationality as “something universal.” At various levels, the concerts challenged audiences to re-evaluate any preconceived notions of institutional racism within the United States. How were these audiences to understand a black bandleader who spoke freely about racial politics and had economic authority over white musicians?

Even as these onstage actions pushed the State Department’s narrative of progress toward an egalitarian future, Gillespie’s performance served another purpose. The emphasis on blues traditions, church spirituals, and the styles of New Orleans, Dixieland, and swing placed jazz within a historical trajectory of African American music. At the same time, the “African drumming” demonstration overtly tied the music to the

55 Stearns’s papers include concert programs and lecture notes in English, Turkish, Bosnian (or Croatian), Arabic, and Greek. See: “Caz Hakkinda Kisa bir Izahat” (An Introduction to Jazz), 30 April 1956, box 24, folder 23, 1956 Dizzy Gillespie Tour of the Near East, Lecture Handouts; “Kratak Podatak o Jazzu” (An Introduction to Jazz), 9 May 1956, box 24, folder 23, 1956 Dizzy Gillespie Tour of the Near East, Lecture Handouts; “Ορισμός της Τζαζ” (A Definition of Jazz), May 1956, box 11, folder 30, 1956 Dizzy Gillespie Tour of the Near East, Lecture Outlines and Notes; and Concert Program (Greece). All documents from the Stearns Collection, IJS. Also see: “Dizzy Gillespie and His All Stars Jazz Concert,” Concert Program from Abadan Iran (Taj Theater), March 1956, Gillespie Clippings, IJS.
56 Stearns, “Turkey Resounds, Reacts to Dizzy Gillespie Band; Stearns, “Dizzy’s Troupe Casts Spell over Mideast Audiences.”
57 For more on Gillespie’s approach to the local audiences and how he described the racial politics within the US, see: Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be or Not*, 414.
transatlantic movement of African peoples through slavery.\textsuperscript{58} Repurposing jazz history into the performative present shrewdly told a story tying US music to African American expressive culture. Explicitly presenting a notion of US democracy that was inherently hybrid, diverse, and multinational would have been risky. Yet through humor, playfulness, and musical expertise, Gillespie’s performances implied that those qualities lay at the core of US culture. In doing so, he skillfully navigated an ideological space layered with politically charged discourses about communism, racism, and democracy.\textsuperscript{59}

The LPs served a different purpose, as evidenced by the re-organization of materials as well as the musical minutia. Unlike the State Department tour concerts, the LPs included neither small group performances nor big-band vocal tunes.\textsuperscript{60} Gone too were the demonstrations of jazz’s historical development and Gillespie’s antics, jokes, and displays of humor meant to engage with audiences. Though the back of \textit{Dizzy in Greece} replicated the Greek lettering of Gillespie’s name from the concert program (Figures 12 and 13), the LP shared only two titles with the actual Greek performance: “Cool Breeze” and “Groovin’

\textsuperscript{58} Stearns and Gillespie were both heavily invested in this narrative. The connection of jazz to Africa, however, is not without its problems since it often assumes a particular idea of African retention based on a general, historically unspecific sense of the continent. For a detailed overview of this issue see: Steven Feld, \textit{Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra: Five Musical Years in Ghana} (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 53–78; Robin D. G. Kelley, \textit{Africa Speaks, America Answers: Modern Jazz in Revolutionary Times} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Moreno, “Bauza-Gillespie-Latin/Jazz”; and Ronald M. Radano, \textit{Lying up a Nation: Race and Black Music} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

\textsuperscript{59} My reading of Gillespie’s humor as both a tool for relating across forms of cultural difference and a re-presentation of US values is influenced by Glenda R. Carpio’s theorization of African American humor and parody. She writes: “African American humor has been and continues to be both a bountiful source of creativity and pleasure and an energetic mode of social and political critique.” Glenda Carpio, \textit{Laughing Fit to Kill: Black Humor in the Fictions of Slavery} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.

\textsuperscript{60} Vocalist Austin Cromer, who traveled with the band to South America, can be heard on the band’s post-tour LP, \textit{Birks’ Works} (1957).
The arrangement of “Groovin’ High” stayed mostly the same, except that the band omitted the “Whispering” melody meant to illustrate the song’s origin.

Figure 12. Greece concert program title page, 1956. Concert Program (Greece), box 24, folder 22, 1956 Dizzy Gillespie Tour of the Near East, Stearns Collection, IJS.

61 Others songs from the concert program appear on World Statesman, including “Stella by Starlight,” “Night in Tunisia,” and “The Champ.”
Commercial considerations partially account for this difference, since US consumers were the LPs’ target demographic. Potential buyers would not need to buy a record of Gillespie playing Count Basie, for example, when he or she could easily buy an LP of Basie’s own band on the same record label. Nat Hentoff made a similar point in a July 1956 concert review from Birdland published one month after the band’s first recording session. For their US performance, Hentoff writes, the ensemble had to scramble for arrangements because “half of the band’s overseas program was concerned with a historical recapitulation of jazz, a documentary which would not have been usable for American club dates.”\footnote{Hentoff, “Dizzy Gillespie Orchestra: Birdland, New York.” The Birdland performance was the group’s first performance after returning home from the Near East.} The LPs target audience paralleled that of the club date Hentoff mentions.

The differences between Gillespie’s ambassadorial LPs and the tour concerts went beyond market considerations. After all, another Verve LP from 1957 featuring the same ensemble, 	extit{Dizzy Gillespie at Newport}, includes several moments of Gillespie’s musical
humor and onstage antics. The band’s Newport rendition of “Doodlin’,” for example, ends with an impromptu call and response between band members. During the restatement of the theme at the end of the chart, baritone saxophonist Pee Wee Moore purposefully misplays his highly exposed melodic line. Pianist Wynton Kelly responds with a jagged extrapolation of the melody; the band laughs and Gillespie shouts, “Hey!” (5:23). Moore plays his melody again with an exaggerated vibrato, as if mocking Gillespie. The rest of the band mimics this over-exaggerated vibrato, creating a noticeable reaction from the Newport audience (6:24). When the song finally ends, the track continues long enough to catch someone from the audience requesting “Manteca.” Gillespie dejectedly sighs before responding, “It’s coming.” “Manteca” is the next track on the disc, complete with its famous opening chant: “I’ll never go back to Georgia.” Inspired by Gillespie’s experience with Jim Crow in the previous decade, the band sings the phrase in unison with the bass line. While the band also performed “Manteca” and its accompanying chant during the South American leg of the State Department tour, the song does not appear on either World Statesman or Dizzy in Greece.

In total, the band’s studio LPs render jazz as “American” music through their audiovisual design. Without the spoken introductions, interactions with the audience, or moments of humor, the LPs present the stately side of the first jazz ambassador tours. The

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63 Verve also issued three tracks of band’s Newport performance on another LP featuring Count Basie, Mary Lou Williams, and Joe Williams. The disc’s title is At Newport (1958).
64 An even longer recording of “Doodlin’” from South America has Gillespie yelling at the bari player: “Get off. Out out out! Get off the stage.” Someone else then adds: “and don’t come back” (4:01). See: Gillespie, Dizzy in South America, Volume 2.
65 There are no accounts in the press or in Stearns’s papers of the band playing Manteca in the Near East.
accompanying documentation in the liner notes depicts Gillespie as a dignitary, fit for the resolute work of an ambassador. In order to portray Gillespie’s music as serious political work, the records needed to remove direct ties to African American expressive culture that, on tour, occurred through the performances of African drumming, African American spirituals, blues practices, and New Orleans second line traditions. The omission of “Manteca” further avoided any explicit political statements about Jim Crow in the Southern United States. The second LP, *Dizzy in Greece*, placed the band within the cradle of (white European) civilization, visually accentuated by the photo of Gillespie adorned in the white fustanella and positioned against the Greek temple columns. The tour concerts told a story about jazz, racial progress, and the importance of African American music to US culture. The LPs told a related but different story about jazz, political effectiveness in the world, and American exceptionalism. The whitewashing of the band’s activities on tour, as I discuss below, prepared jazz for mainstream US audiences by adopting the language of racial uplift and respectability. The LPs accomplished this by appealing to Western European values through the production of a jazz “concert,” a sentiment accentuated by the records’ visual design.

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66 Well-known photographer Herman Leonard took the cover photo that appears on *Dizzy in Greece*. There is no account of Leonard traveling with the band, so it is likely this photo was taken at a later date. Surviving photos in Stearns’s collection include several photos of Gillespie at ruins standing next to noticeably decaying columns. No photos feature Gillespie in a white fustanella. See: Photo prints (8x10), box 15, folder 6, Dizzy Gillespie Orchestra Tour of the Near East, Spring 1956, Stearns Collection, IJS; and Concert photos, box 15, folder 10, Dizzy Gillespie Orchestra Tour of the Near East, US Dept of State Istanbul/Athens crowds, Street Scenes, Stearns Collection, IJS.


The Technological Moment

Gillespie signed with his label, Norgran, in 1953. With a name derived from the label’s owner and principal producer, Norman Granz, Norgran offered Gillespie flexibility and a large degree of artistic freedom with his recording projects. From 1953 to 1956, Gillespie recorded with strings, big bands, a large Afro-Cuban ensemble, and various small groups, often paired with other top-tier artists such as Stan Getz and Roy Eldridge. Gillespie also took part in Granz’s popular and profitable Jazz at the Philharmonic (JATP) tours, which featured an all-star cast of musicians playing in a jam-session style format. In total, a partnership with Granz offered Gillespie a regular stream of recordings, concert performances, and the opportunity to tour all over the world.

This period of artistic exploration for Gillespie came during a time of significant change for the industry as record companies were selling more discs and making greater profits than ever before. As LPs became the dominant format, record labels increasingly devoted more resources to visual design and layout. Carefully crafted graphics and cover images replaced simple lettering and recurrent visual themes. Record titles became

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67 Granz began JATP in 1944 in Los Angeles. He expanded the concert series into a nationwide tour in the mid-1940s and, by the mid-1950s was taking JATP to Europe. Notable musicians on the tours include Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Ben Webster, Stan Getz, Roy Eldridge, Harry “Sweets” Edison, Charlie Parker, Benny Carter, Hank Jones, Oscar Peterson, Ray Brown, Louie Bellson, Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, and Ella Fitzgerald. The tours were also known for being racially integrated on stage and for Granz’s insistence on desegregated audiences. See: Tad Hershorn, Norman Granz: The Man Who Used Jazz for Justice (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 96, 104–10.

68 I cite these figures in chapter 1 (see Tables 1 and 2), but they bear repeating. In 1957 industry sales were $360 million, an increase from $203 million in 1947. In the two-year period between 1954 and 1956, LP sales rose from 11.1 to 33.5 million. By 1957 the format’s percentage of industry sales was 61%, up from 30% in 1953. See: Robert Shelton, “Happy Tunes on Cash Registers,” New York Times, 16 March 1958, XX14.

progressively more poetic and evocative rather than simply descriptive. Discs also began featuring detailed liner notes, complete with track information, personnel listings, and other discographical information. Many of the first liner notes mimicked the notes of classical 78-rpm albums in their form and content, emphasizing the biography, description, and background of the music and artist. As the genre developed, prominent jazz critics such as Leonard Feather, Nat Hentoff, Martin Williams, and Whitney Balliett all began writing liner notes while also publishing articles in the most well-known jazz publications. Liner notes came to have a ubiquitous presence on 1950s LPs, developing alongside the industry’s adoption of the LP. These trends coincided with increased attention to audio fidelity and recording technique as disc jackets began to display words like “high fidelity,” “in living stereo,” and “360 degree sound.” LP records were becoming audiovisual objects that stood in contrast to the largely unadorned discs of the 78-rpm era.

Two major musical trends accompanied this industry-wide change in format and design during the 1950s. On the one hand, the rise of hard bop allowed musicians to

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69 For example, the titles of Blue Note’s first two 12-inch LPs, most likely released in 1953, were *Miles Davis, Vol. 1* (BLP 1501) and *Miles Davis Vol. 2* (BLP 1502). Compare these titles to two discs from 1957: Sonny Rollins’s *Newk’s Time* (BLP 4001) and Horace Silver’s *6 Pieces of Silver* (BLP 1539). See the numerical and title catalog listings in: Michael Cuscuna and Michel Ruppli, *The Blue Note Label: A Discography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 697–99.


72 The term “Living Stereo” appeared on RCA discs in the late-1950s. Columbia Records’s LPs displayed “360 degree sound” on their LPs beginning in the mid-1950s. The term “high fidelity” or “hi fi” became an industry buzzword during the same time. The wide use of the term led to, among other things, the adoption of this phrase for the well-known periodical *High Fidelity*, a magazine founded in 1951. For an overview see: David Morton, *Sound Recording: The Life Story of a Technology* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 129–40.
challenge prevailing notions of jazz modernism by foregrounding the music’s roots in African American expressive culture.\textsuperscript{73} On the other hand, label owners like Norman Granz, producers such as George Avakian, and Newport Festival founder George Wein pushed jazz towards the mainstream.\textsuperscript{74} Granz issued records featuring Ella Fitzgerald singing popular standards accompanied by strings and targeted large concert halls for his JATP tours. As the head of popular albums at Columbia Records, Avakian maintained an active jazz roster and successfully produced several crossover records featuring Dave Brubeck, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Miles Davis. By starting the Newport Jazz Festival, Wein brought jazz to the affluent enclave of Newport Beach. Wein initially titled the outdoor concert series “America’s Jazz Festival” and gave the Voice of America broadcasting agency license to record and broadcast from the festival grounds.\textsuperscript{75} While jazz musicians, including Gillespie, distanced themselves from the commercially driven popular music market, many were able to benefit from the rising status of jazz into the US mainstream.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{73} For more on how the racial politics of modernism figured into the commercial practices in jazz during the early-1950s, see: Monson, Freedom Sounds, 12. On the rise of hard bop in relation to a developing Afro-modernity see: Mark Anthony Neal, What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture (New York: Routledge, 1999); Guthrie P. Ramsey, Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
\textsuperscript{74} Davenport, Jazz Diplomacy, 43; Monson, Freedom Sounds, 12.
\textsuperscript{75} For a detailed account of the mainstreaming of jazz at the Newport Jazz Festival see: John Gennari, Blowin’ Hot and Cool: Jazz and Its Critics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 207–15, 225–49. For more on contestations over racial politics at Newport see: Saul, Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t, 123–43.
\textsuperscript{76} Gillespie openly criticized the commercial music of Elvis Presley, Guy Lombardo, and Liberace in a 1957 article in Esquire: Dizzy Gillespie and Ralph Ginzburg, “Jazz Is Too Good for Americans,” Esquire, June 1957, 143.
Against this backdrop, Granz founded Verve Records in 1956 with his eye towards the popular market and mainstream audiences.\textsuperscript{77} Granz initially conceived of Verve as a vehicle for Ella Fitzgerald, whom Granz had been managing since the mid-1940s.\textsuperscript{78} Fitzgerald’s initial LPs on Verve each featured the repertoire of a different iconic composer associated with the Great American Songbook. This organizational strategy took advantage of the 12-inch LP’s capacity, which allowed for a single theme to be sustained through twenty-two minutes of uninterrupted music per side.\textsuperscript{79} Granz succeeded beyond expectation. \textit{Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Cole Porter Song Book}, one of Verve’s foundational LPs, became Fitzgerald’s first top-selling record when it reached the number one position of the jazz charts in August 1956 (several months before the release of Gillespie’s \textit{World Statesman}).\textsuperscript{80} Between July 1956 and June 1957, Fitzgerald’s Verve records overwhelmingly

\textsuperscript{77}“Granz Forms Two Labels, Dickers for Mars Masters, Cuts EP Price,” \textit{Down Beat}, 8 February 1956, 8. The article quotes Granz describing the artists on this new label as ones with “commercial possibilities . . . if their pop sides were released on a label that has no association with jazz.” The article also outlines Verve’s strategy to target disc jockey promotion, which Granz says is “necessary for a pop line.”

\textsuperscript{78}Granz signed Fitzgerald away from Decca, the label Fitzgerald had been with for twenty years. See: “Fitzgerald to Granz Label,” \textit{Down Beat}, 8 February 1956, 8. The article describes Verve as Granz’s “pop company.”

\textsuperscript{79}Granz’s other early discs at Verve included another series titled \textit{The Genius of Charlie Parker}, which arranged Parker’s master recordings from the 78-rpm era into a single package. See: Verve Records, Advertisement, “Eight High Fidelity Albums by the Jazz-Immortal, Charlie Parker,” \textit{Down Beat}, 30 May 1957, 25. Granz’s interest in creating concept albums went back to the early-1940s. The first recordings of Jazz at the Philharmonic concert series, for example, were placed in multi-disc 78-rpm albums that included detailed descriptions of the concert, including personnel and solo order: \textit{Jazz at the Philharmonic: Presented by Norman Granz} (1945). Granz released JATP concerts on several labels including Stinson, Asch, Disc, Clef, Norgran, and Verve. My thanks to Tad Hershorn at the Institute of Jazz Studies for pointing me to the Stinson disc cited here.

occupied the top position on the jazz best-seller list. In a May 1957 disc jockey poll, Fitzgerald was named a top recording personality alongside Harry Belafonte, Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Perry Como, Pat Boon, and Julie London.

With Fitzgerald’s discs, Verve attempted to walk a fine line of mainstream appeal, between popular and jazz tastes. To a large degree, this was a success. Verve earned an estimated $2 million in sales in its first year. Granz unified his other labels, including Norgran and Clef, under the Verve banner in 1957. All subsequent Gillespie titles, including Dizzy in Greece, appeared under the Verve imprint. The label also reissued many LPs from Norgran’s catalog, usually with no changes besides an updated logo on the top right-hand corner of the album cover, as was the case with World Statesman.

Compared to one another, the covers of World Statesman and Dizzy in Greece reflect the changing priorities of the record industry in terms of visual design. World Statesman featured the silhouette of Gillespie against a predominantly unadorned white and blue background and used a photo recycled from a 1954 Clef LP titled Trumpet Battle featuring Gillespie and Roy Eldridge (Figures 14 and 15). Norgran’s use of existing visual material fit

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81 After several months at number two, Fitzgerald’s Cole Porter record reached the top bestseller spot in August 1956. Her other bestselling records featured the music of Richard Rodgers and her duets with Louis Armstrong. See “Best Sellers” in Down Beat in these issue in 1956: July 25 (p. 22), August 8 (20), August 22 (20), September 5 (20), September 19 (22), October 3 (22), October 17 (20); November 14 (22), and December 12 (20). For 1957 see: January 9 (22), February 6 (20), March 6 (32), April 4 (21), May 2 (24), May 30 (22), and June 27 (24). Fitzgerald’s success bolstered other Verve artists, including Anita O’Day, Count Basie, Oscar Peterson, and Dizzy Gillespie, all of whom regularly appeared in the top five.

82 In the same poll, three of Fitzgerald’s LPs ranked among the top ten vocal LPs of the year. See: “1957 Deejay Poll,” Down Beat, 30 May 1957, 12.


84 Ibid.
within the logic of the early 1950s record industry, when many labels reused visual content among their albums. In contrast, *Dizzy in Greece* features an edge-to-edge image of Gillespie and his trumpet. The vibrant color of his Greek outfit stands out against the monochromatic yet memorable background of the textured stone columns.85

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85 Granz’s emphasis on visual design also had precedent. In 1950, he produced a limited edition 78-rpm album titled *The Jazz Scene* that matched carefully selected music with the striking photography of Gjon Mili and illustrations of David Stone Martin. The album, originally issued on Mercury, included six 12-inch 78-rpm discs.
In both cases, visual design foregrounded Gillespie’s achievements abroad. *World Statesman* references Gillespie’s ambassadorial role through its title while the knight helmet subtly alludes to a Western-European cultural history of citizenship. Stearns’s liner notes give an overview of Gillespie’s tour through the telling of anecdotes from different locations, usually accompanied by specific citations of local newspapers.86 *Dizzy in Greece* takes a different approach and locates Gillespie at a particular place and time. The first quarter of Stearns’s liner notes focus on a specific event in Athens, which he describes as the band’s greatest diplomatic moment:

The band reached its peak, musically and diplomatically, in Athens where it out-rocked the rock-throwing Greek students. John “Dizzy” Gillespie and his ambassadors of jazz arrived just after the riots of May, 1956, and anti-American

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86 Stearns’s collection of personal papers about the State Department tours—as opposed to his archive that became the Institute of Jazz Studies—included several dozen newspaper clippings from the United States and cities the band visited. See: box 11, folder 33, 1956 Dizzy Gillespie Tour of the Near East Clippings, Stearns Collection, IJS.
feeling was intense. Right or wrong, the Greeks felt that the United States should help them take Cyprus back from the British. Newspapers were asking why the Americans were sending jazz bands instead of guns. And the opening concert was staged for the same students who threw rocks at the windows of the United States Information Service.

It was a tense moment and the students jeered as the band started to play. Then silence. And then, a complete and riotous switch—the roar of approval drowned out the big band; hats, jackets, and whatnot were tossed at the ceiling; and even the local gendarmes danced in the aisles. Between numbers, Gillespie miraculously kept the kids under control. After the concert, they carried him out on their shoulders, chanting “Dizzy, Dizzy, Dizzy,” stalling traffic for a half hour and a dozen blocks. This music spelled out the happy, friendly, and generous side of American life with explosive force and, incidentally, siphoned off a Niagara of excess energy. 

By locating the band in Greece, both in title and tale, Stearns calls attention to the music's potential to dispel violent tendencies and overcome perceived differences. The stories of the students dancing in the aisles with the authorities and then carrying Gillespie into the street portray a moment of shared jubilation. Peaceful excitement is key to this narrative. Stearns describes this as the band’s “peak” in order to show the positive outcome of music merged with diplomacy. He leaves formal descriptions of the music until the second half of the liner notes in order to highlight the specific ways that Gillespie and his music served an overtly diplomatic function.

Within the context of Verve’s founding, the record industry’s total growth, and the LP’s increased popularity, Gillespie’s two albums began circulating at a particularly significant technological moment. Granz took advantage of this transition within the industry to capitalize on Gillespie’s official role with the State Department. Verve offered the ideal platform to place jazz in conversation with concurrent discourses of race.

87 Stearns, liner notes to Dizzy in Greece.
relations and Cold War politics. Visual design matched with music to tell a particular story of jazz that garnered value both in its state-sanctioned status and its success with audiences in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Granz packaged Gillespie’s music in ways that explicitly accented its politics at every level of design.

**The Political Moment**

The Greek student riots mentioned in the liner notes to *Dizzy in Greece* made front-page headlines in the United States while Gillespie toured the Near East in May 1956.88 The students were protesting British sovereignty in nearby Cyprus, then a British Crown colony. Cyprus was seen as a strategic military and economic stronghold for Britain’s Cold War operations in the Middle East. Separatists in Cyprus, wanting to unite with Greece, had gained significant political power in the early 1950s, resulting in increased violence between 1954 and 1956.89 Seeking to suppress the separatist movement, Britain announced its plan to execute two Greek Cypriots they labeled as “terrorists” on May 8, 1956, mere days before Gillespie arrived in Athens. The continued US support of Britain was already unpopular with the local population and this announcement catalyzed riots on May 9 in Salonika outside the British Consulate as well as in Athens, where protestors threw rocks

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89 In 1954, 4,000 students aggressively protested against the United States for refusing to support the Cyprus-Greek unity. See: Brendan O’Malley and Ian Craig, *The Cyprus Conspiracy: America, Espionage, and the Turkish Invasion* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 3–34.
and attempted to storm the office of the United States Information Agency (USIA). Undeterred, the British government executed the two men on the morning of May 10. Two days later, on May 12, Gillespie’s band arrived in Athens to perform for an audience that largely supported Cypriot independence.90

Though Verve did not issue Dizzy in Greece until late 1957, the story of Gillespie being carried into the street by former rioters first circulated in a July 14, 1956 article written by Stearns for the Saturday Review titled “Is Jazz Good Propaganda? The Dizzy Gillespie Tour.”91 Published exactly two months after the events in Greece, the article argues for jazz’s validity as a diplomatic tool. The music, Stearns writes, could “communicate more of the sincerity, joy, and vigor of the American way of life than several other American creations inspired by Europe.”92 Elsewhere in the article, Stearns accentuates jazz’s relationship to the “American way of life.” “On the surface,” he continues, “everybody—even the old folks—seemed to want to love jazz, even before they heard it. They definitely associated jazz with the cheerful, informal, and generous side of American life and they were bowled over by its spontaneity and vitality.”93

The article, both in tone and content, became the basis for Stearns’s liner notes to World Statesman and Dizzy in Greece. Both liner notes link Gillespie’s onstage performance to current events in order to argue for jazz’s political relevance and convince

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90 Gillespie remained in Athens until May 21. For a full schedule see: Monson, Freedom Sounds, 115. For more background about the conflict see: O’Malley and Craig, The Cyprus Conspiracy.
91 Stearns, “Is Jazz Good Propaganda? The Dizzy Gillespie Tour.” Published in July and, thus, between Gillespie’s tours, the article predates the release of World Statesman by several months.
92 Ibid., 31.
93 Ibid., 28.
listeners that jazz’s value extended beyond US borders because of the music’s ability to overcome cultural difference. In the notes to World Statesman, for example, Stearns describes the band’s “team-spirit” that actively “spells out a new kind of freedom. Maybe that is why jazz is America’s best-loved cultural export.” By using a metaphor that references the movement of goods across national boundaries, Stearns links jazz to the entrepreneurial spirit at the center of US capitalism while his emphasis on the music’s “vitality” associates the music with democratic ideals of progress, action, and freedom.

Several stories appearing in both liner notes and the Saturday Review article attempt to demonstrate the “generous side of American Life,” a reoccurring phrase meant to explain how Gillespie’s music reached local populations. Jimmy Powell, for example, donated reeds to a local musician and Gillespie apparently quoted phrases from “Ochi Chornia,” a famous Russian folk song, as a nod towards the Russian Folk Ballet members in attendance at one performance. Other stories directly addressed the tour’s cultural politics. In one memorable anecdote, Gillespie invited a snake charmer into his room despite vigorous objections by hotel management; another describes Gillespie’s refusal to play a concert in Ankara, Turkey until the street kids standing outside the gates were allowed to attend. Both World Statesman and Stearns’s article quoted Gillespie’s

94 For an earlier example of liner notes explicitly relating jazz to Cold War politics see Louis Armstrong’s Ambassador Satch (1956).
95 Stearns, liner notes to World Statesman.
96 The phrase appears verbatim in both liner notes. On World Statesman: “They associate this music with the relaxed and generous side of American life, and the informal vitality of the performance clinched the conviction.” On Dizzy in Greece: “This music spelled out the happy, friendly, and generous side of American life with explosive force and, incidentally, siphoned off a Niagara of excess energy.” Stearns, liner notes to World Statesman; Stearns, liner notes to Dizzy in Greece.
explanation: “I came here to play for all the people.” In total, Stearns establishes that Gillespie’s version of diplomacy meant sharing his music with everyone, regardless of social, class, or ethnic positioning. By implication, this also included white middle-class audiences. Outlining Gillespie’s moral imperative in this way also directly tied his actions to middle-class values: jazz unifies people together and does so through the music’s capacity to engage peacefully across differences as well as respect individual forms of expression.

Stearns’s endeavor to carve out a place for jazz in Cold War USA can also be seen in his 1956 monograph, The Story of Jazz, published within weeks of World Statesman. Along with presenting a historical overview of the music, The Story of Jazz includes long sections about jazz’s connections to West Africa and to the racial tensions experienced by jazz musicians. Overall, Stearns’s book portrays the music as a uniquely “American” contribution to the world. “Jazz,” he writes in the introduction, “has played a part, for better or worse, in forming the American character.” In a later chapter, Stearns addresses Gillespie’s tours directly and describes the trumpeter’s music as a “secret sonic

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97 Stearns, liner notes to World Statesman; Stearns, “Is Jazz Good Propaganda? The Dizzy Gillespie Tour,” 30–31; Stearns, liner notes to Dizzy in Greece.
100 Stearns, The Story of Jazz, xi. Stearns was also the founder of the Institute of Jazz Studies, now located at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey in Newark. In an October 3, 1957 Down Beat article, Stearns wrote that by “foster[ing] an understanding of jazz” the Institute would “serve an increasingly important function in the study of American culture.” Marshall Stearns, “Institute of Jazz: A Discussion of Its Attempts to Foster an Understanding of Jazz,” Down Beat, 3 October 1957, 26.
weapon” in the war against communism. In “win[ning] over the people,” he continues, “the friendly and free wheeling band . . . led many people to abandon their communist-inspired notions of American democracy in the course of one concert.”

Stearns’s portrayal of jazz cultivating political goodwill was tailored to the moment. In June 1956, a month before Saturday Review published Stearns’s article, Gillespie played for President Eisenhower at the White House Correspondents’ Dinner in Washington, DC. Louisiana Senator Allen Ellender, a pro-segregationist, took this moment to openly criticize the Cultural Exchange program and Gillespie’s potential to be a national asset: “I never heard so much noise in my life. . . . To send such jazz as Mr. Gillespie, I can assure you that instead of doing goodwill it will do harm and the people will really believe we are barbarians.” In August 1956, a group of senators led by Ellender voted to block the use of jazz in the USIA’s programs abroad, prompting a strong reaction from the black press. The following excerpt from the Arkansas State Press encapsulates this reaction: “Southern senators, headed by Ellender want other types of music and though they don’t admit it publicly, they are really after keeping Negro talent from abroad.”

Gillespie’s activities

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102 Stearns, The Story of Jazz, 294–95.
103 The first part of Ellender’s statement was widely reported. For example, see: “Jazz Abroad—Gillespie’s World Tour,” San Francisco Chronicle, 27 January 1957. Document VII. 208 in 1957–Jan. to July (VII. 204–236) folder, Gillespie Clippings, IJS. For the full quote see: Reinhold Wagnleitner, Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 212.
104 Calvin Delores, “Seein’ Stars,” Arkansas State Press, 10 August 1956, 7. African American newspapers in general covered Gillespie’s tours with enthusiasm and pride. The Pittsburg Courier, for example, had a two part series in June 1956 about Gillespie’s travels abroad, noting that the
with the State Department placed jazz and its practitioners at the center of debates about race in US culture.

Gillespie had a keen awareness of these political stakes and was not afraid to enter the national conversation. Reacting to criticism at the end of 1956, Gillespie wired the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee, majority leader Lyndon B. Johnson, asking for an audience in order to defend jazz’s role in US activities abroad. His request was not answered. Gillespie had also sent a telegram to President Eisenhower after the Senate voted to revoke tour funding in August 1956:

Shocked and discouraged by decision of the senate in the supplementary appropriation bill to outlaw American jazz music as a way of making millions of friends for USA abroad. Our trip thru Middle East proved conclusively that our interracial group was powerfully effective against Red propaganda. Jazz is our own American folk music—the communication with all people regardless of language or social barriers. I urge that you do all in your power to continue exporting this invaluable form of American expression of which we are so proud.

Gillespie championed jazz by emphasizing his interracial group, the music’s wide popularity across social strata, and its inherent connections to US culture. In doing so, he adopted language similar to other African American leaders that openly spoke out against communism. He also stressed the “folk” aspect of jazz to prove that the music could

band was doing “much more” than performing music: “[Gillespie] accomplished—perhaps better than all the ambassadors and envoys and ministers combined—the almost impossible feat of making genuine friends on an intimate, personal basis.” See: “Indians Dizzy over Gillespie’s Jazz: Part 1.” Several months before, in a 21 April 1956 article, the New York Amsterdam News noted the enthusiastic reception by the crowd during a concert in Karachi Pakistan, specifying how the State Department was “extremely pleased with all reports on the first lap of the tour and it is felt that the Gillespie orchestra is more than serving its purpose to promote goodwill in the tense area.” See: “1,000 Jam Karachi Theatre for Dizzy,” New York Amsterdam News, 21 April 1956, 16.


106 Ibid. This telegram was widely reported in newspapers and jazz trade publications.
connect with world populations through an art form unique to the United States. This point connected directly with the State Department’s own language about the cultural exchange program.

In spring 1957, more controversy erupted when a congressional appropriations subcommittee revealed the $141,000 cost of Gillespie’s two tours.107 Senator Styles Bridges, the senior republican on the Senate Appropriations committee, commented that he was “not very impressed” that jazz has “proven of real value in reaching important foreign audiences.”108 According to the New York Journal-American, Sen. Bridges made these comments in light of the exorbitant budget (in his view) that the USIA requested for the 1957 fiscal year.109 Others like Senator William E. Jenner also publicly expressed criticisms of the USIA’s use of government funds, naming Gillespie in particular. “We could not find any way to use the majestic power of America to give a little help to the Hungarians when they were fighting for their freedom,” he wrote. “But now that their struggles are over, we

107 The cost was $100,839 and $40,500 for the Near East and South American tours, respectively. Only a small portion of this cost was made up by ticket sales, leaving the US Government to pay for the remainder. See: “Bop Notes Come High,” 10 April 1957. Document VIII. 222 in 1957–Jan. to July (VIII. 204–236) folder, Gillespie Clippings, IJS. Though no author or paper name appears on the document, the article comes from a Boston area newspaper.
108 “It Cost 84G to Send Dizzy Culture Abroad,” New York News, 10 May 1957. According to the Boston Herald, Stearns spoke at the committee meeting and championed Gillespie’s tour as “one of the most successful cultural goodwill gestures the United States had made since the war.” “Dizzy’s Salary,” Boston Sunday Herald, 14 April 1957. Donald B. Cook, head of the Special Projects Division for the State Department, also testified. According to the New York Times, Cook told the committee that the tours helped “offset reports of racial prejudice” by showing the possibilities of “attain[ing] eminence in the field of the arts.” “U.S. Finds Unrest in Soviet Sphere,” New York Times, 11 April 1957. Documents VIII. 226, 224, and 221, respectively, in 1957–Jan. to July (VIII. 204–236) folder, Gillespie Clippings, IJS.
are going to send them Dizzy Gillespie or another jazz band.”\textsuperscript{10} No controversy arose from similar ensembles, like the LA Symphony and Ballet Theater Company, whose tours cost $385,000 and $259,000, respectively.\textsuperscript{11}

Many news sources, including \textit{The New York Post} and \textit{The Boston Herald}, reported that Gillespie’s salary, quoted at $2,150, made him the highest-paid government employee during those weeks.\textsuperscript{12} As one article put it: “President Eisenhower’s $100,000 a year salary, exclusive of expense allowances, amounts to a little less than $2,000 a week.”\textsuperscript{13} These reports, as Ingrid Monson details, inaccurately described the allocation of fees and payment to Gillespie’s band. Official documents reveal that during the Middle East tour the band \textit{in total} was paid $1,950 per week (plus per diem), a figure raised to $2,500 (plus per diem) for the South American tour. Since this amount was split among members of the band—twenty-one for the first, twenty for the second—everyone including Gillespie made roughly the equivalent of union scale, or around $200.\textsuperscript{14}

Gillespie again spoke out in defense through a June 1957 article in \textit{Esquire} titled “Jazz Too Good for Americans.” In the article, Gillespie points to the music’s increased popularity and acceptance all over the world, arguing that the United States was not doing

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\textsuperscript{10} “Gillespie in Bid to Defend State Dept. Program before Senate Critics.”
\textsuperscript{12} “Dizzy’s Salary.”
\textsuperscript{13} “Bop Notes Come High.”
\textsuperscript{14} The archival documents reveal that some band members were paid a little more than others. Monson suspects that these were Gillespie and the band’s arrangers: Quincy Jones, Melba Liston, Ernie Wilkins. Monson, \textit{Freedom Sounds}, 120–23, 355fn38.
enough within its borders and urging the middle-class readership of the magazine to do the same. Using a metaphor of free speech, an ideological pillar of US democracy, he proposed that jazz be included in school curricula: “Let the children be aware, that no class distinction should exist between jazz and the classics. Let them be told that jazz is, in effect, free speech in music.” Referencing his tours with the State Department, he writes that the audiences in these countries have a healthier attitude toward the music than people within the United States:

They [foreign audiences] don’t make a moral issue out of it, as we sometimes do. It’s of no moment to them that jazz was first played in the whore houses of New Orleans, that it was heard in Prohibition speak-easies. Nor do they make a racial issue out of jazz. There is no significant amount of anti-Negro prejudice in their countries for them to holdout against this music.

They are interested in jazz for jazz’ sake. They listen to it for its musical message, not its sociological implications.

While he paints a rosy picture of race relations abroad, Gillespie articulates a vision for the future where jazz would be treated on its own musical merits and not be negatively judged along class and racial lines. He also envisions governmental support for jazz through the establishment of a national archive and the continued patronage of jazz musicians performing abroad. If jazz were to rise in cultural status, he continues, “people like Senator Ellender of Louisiana would no longer come out publicly and say of jazz: ‘I never heard so much noise in my life.”

\[\text{Gillespie and Ginzburg, “Jazz Is Too Good for Americans.”}\]
\[\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., 58.}\]
Esquire targeted white college-educated males interested in automobiles, travel, technology, sports, and politics, regularly portraying jazz as a music of male leisure.\textsuperscript{118} To reach this audience Gillespie adopted the moral ideals of American exceptionalism and European musical aesthetics. Using a language legible to middle-class readers, he argued that accepting jazz within mainstream culture would be “better for America.”\textsuperscript{119} At several points in the article, he emphasizes that jazz was best appreciated through careful listening and urged readers to consider jazz as a serious art form that reached many different populations. Other people around the world understood this music in this way, argued Gillespie, and so too should middle-class peoples within the United States.

Within this context, Granz issued World Statesman and Dizzy in Greece in late 1956 and 1957, respectively. Granz considered it smart business practice to take advantage of Gillespie’s national exposure and the cultural significance of the jazz ambassador tours. The organization and content of the albums, however, were surely related to the political moment as well. After all, Granz had fought against segregation and the laws of Jim Crow throughout his career. Beginning in the 1940s, Granz included an anti-discrimination clause in his contracts that guaranteed de-segregated audiences, even while traveling in the South.\textsuperscript{120} When, in 1944, Granz first presented the jam-session style concerts under the

\textsuperscript{118} The magazine’s subtitle was “the magazine for men.” As a side note, Playboy founder Hugh Hefner wrote promotional copy for Esquire until 1953 when he broke off to found his own magazine. Jazz was regularly featured in Playboy in the fifties and sixties.

\textsuperscript{119} Gillespie, “Jazz Is Too Good for Americans,” 58.

\textsuperscript{120} Granz biographer Tad Hershorn details how Granz actively encouraged other bandleaders—including Gene Krupa, Jimmy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, Stan Kenton, and Benny Goodman, among others—to similarly place anti-discrimination language in their contracts. Hershorn, Norman Granz, 105.
Jazz at the Philharmonic banner, he did so as a benefit for twenty-one Mexican youths convicted of crimes committed during the zoot suit riots of 1943. That same year, Granz similarly organized concerts to support the Fair Employment Practices Commission and other organizations fighting for anti-lynching legislation.\footnote{Monson, \textit{Freedom Sounds}, 37.} Under the JATP title, Granz founded several record labels and began touring the concerts worldwide. His business acumen provided a steady stream of concerts, recordings, and promotional opportunities for his musicians, while offering them (among other things) first class accommodations on the road. Granz, in other words, became one of the jazz industry’s most successful businessmen and did so with a politically conscious edge.\footnote{Hershorn, \textit{Norman Granz}. Hershorn refers to such actives in the subtitle of his monograph, \textit{The Man Who Used Jazz for Justice}.}

Issuing an LP that portrayed Gillespie as an active agent on the Cold War’s front line was a way to leverage white middle-class sympathies towards the fight against communism for the purpose of selling records. At this particular moment, 1956–57, presenting Gillespie’s music as a symbol for nationalistic pride and racial harmony fit solidly within Granz’s investment in the fight for social justice. Both Stearns and Gillespie were using print media to place jazz on the national stage. Granz likely recognized how his primary business, selling records, could interact with the culture of print-capitalism that, as Benedict Anderson famously argues, is vital to constructing the nation-state.\footnote{Benedict Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities}, 2nd ed. (New York: Verso, 1991), 42–46.} Granz contributed in his own way, by transforming Stearns’s article and Gillespie’s music into two long-playing records.
When Verve issued *Dizzy in Greece* at the end of 1957, jazz had been operating in an aggressively uneven political climate since Gillespie left for the Near East in the middle of 1956. Both LPs, as a result, adopted the same language and rhetorical strategies as other forms of print media covering Gillespie’s ambassadorial tours, mostly notably Stearns’s article in *Stereo Review*. As such, the records served to make Gillespie’s music audible to the various strata of US culture by convincing listeners of jazz’s import and relevance. Since the jazz ambassador tours ultimately survived the forceful pushback from Congress, *Dizzy in Greece* also celebrated Gillespie as a trailblazer and political victor. Consider the first words of the LP’s liner notes:

“This is the second album (the first was DIZZY GILLESPIE: WORLD STATESMAN) of the music that piled up friends and momentum as it swung through the Middle East on the first State Department tour in jazz history. Once more, the power of jazz as a world-wide force for goodwill was documented to the hilt and, shortly thereafter, jazz band tours became a fixed part of government policy.”

Stearns’s use of “power” doubly invokes the emotional effect of the music and the state-sanctioned power of diplomacy with Gillespie’s performance serving as evidence. Stearns relies on a loosely-defined notion of “goodwill” and stresses the historical significance of jazz’s use in an official capacity by the State Department for the first of many times to come.

Gillespie’s *World Statesman* and *Dizzy in Greece* took advantage of the political moment by interacting with broader currents of US Cold War politics. *World Statesman*  

124 Stearns, liner notes to *Dizzy in Greece*.  
125 While entertaining President Eisenhower at the 1956 White House Press Correspondents’ dinner, Gillespie similarly told *Jet* magazine: “My purpose in making the tour was to create goodwill for the US, and believe me, we sure need it over there.” See: “Dizzy Gillespie, Nat Cole Entertain President.”
began circulating while debates raged in Congress about the effectiveness of the jazz abroad. Gillespie’s band similarly went into the studio to finish the recordings for *Dizzy in Greece* during the same month that contestations surrounding Gillespie’s salary raged in US newspapers. While the timing is correlational (rather than causal), Granz would have paid close attention to how debates about jazz and diplomacy were unfolding in the media. In this way, both LPs were not objects of the past, but discs that imagined a future for jazz in the United States.

**Conclusion**

Gillespie’s ambassadorial LPs were the result of several overlapping political and technological forces at work. For one, *World Statesman* and *Dizzy in Greece* were affected by the industry’s adoption of the 12-inch LP. The exponentially increasing sales across a wide spectrum of consumers made the LP into a media of mainstream popular culture, accentuated by the increased attention to visual design. These changes greatly influenced Granz as he positioned Verve within the already well-established channels of

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126 By considering Gillespie as operating within popular culture, I do not mean to suggest that his popularity as a musician was comparable to other 1950s pop icons such as Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Guy Lombardo, or Liberace. Without records appearing on the *Billboard* charts, day-to-day coverage in national tabloids, or a record deal with a major label, Gillespie was not a popular artist in this sense. Rather, I wish to evoke cultural theorist Richard Iton’s understanding of the term. Iton defines popular culture as the subset of cultural practices filtered through various forms of mass communication and commercialism. Iton, *Black Fantastic*, 29ff. My understanding of how culture relates to mass communication and consumption is also influenced by: Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 17–20.
print-capitalism, especially those publications aimed at middle-class white audiences.¹²⁷ The use of jazz as a weapon against Soviet propaganda through unprecedented support from the US government presented an opportunity for him to raise the music’s position in America’s cultural hierarchy. By portraying the music as a form of collaboration between an interracial group of musicians and the nation-state, the LPs invariably engaged with domestic debates about civil rights within the United States. As a result, the LPs’ content became less about what actually took place on the tours and more about making the music legible to audiences that would sympathize with Cold War struggles abroad.

Here, the omission of the South American tours looms large as Granz only presented Gillespie’s activities in Eastern Europe and the Near East. The LPs purposefully appealed to the stature that Europe still maintained with US audiences. The records explicitly portray themselves as a jazz “concert” without Gillespie’s vocal interludes or characteristic humor. This marketing strategy towards a political end can also be seen on the cover of *Dizzy in Greece*, with Gillespie in his white fustanella, leaning against the pillars of a temple that had resiliently stood the test of time. By implication, the music should as well.

The discrepancies in repertoire between the LPs and tour concerts speak to the different kinds of political work each was attempting to accomplish. The tours’ success depended on collaboration between musicians and the nation-state that, on stage, performed an ideal of democracy for local populations. Gillespie used this opportunity to

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¹²⁷ My reading of the LP as an object of cultural materialization operating within the context of a rising global market and mass consumerism within the United States is also influenced by David Kazanjian’s discussion of structures of power formed through the production, distribution, and consumption of goods. See: David Kazanjian, *The Colonizing Trick: National Culture and Imperial Citizenship in Early America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 27.
his advantage by staging an inherently hybrid and diverse version of US culture, one that foregrounded African American expressive culture. The LPs, in contrast, were meant specifically for US consumers. As such, they construed the music as an effective tool for combatting communism abroad. Gillespie’s tours were a start, but it was equally important for US audiences to understand jazz as a participant in the serious business of ambassadorial work.

Granz attempted to carve out a place for jazz in mainstream America while also supporting his own anti-segregationist agenda. By reshaping Stearns’s Saturday Review article into album liner notes, the LPs contributed to timely debates about jazz, race, and democracy at the national level. Though released a year apart, both records make reference to these debates at different levels of organization and design. The LPs were visual, aural, and physical representations of jazz tailored to the political moment. Through their collective and individual actions, Granz, Stearns, and Gillespie placed jazz at the intersection of domestic and international politics. Doing so pushed the music into a contested arena of US culture from different sides of the music industry. Their work comes together on World Statesman and Dizzy in Greece, where the abstract connection between jazz and the nation-state materialize onto two 12-inch black vinyl records.

Chapter 3 Discography: Dizzy Gillespie and Other Jazz Ambassadors


Chapter 4

Capturing the Scene:
The Cannonball Adderley Quintet in San Francisco

It is October 1959 at the Jazz Workshop, a club in the North Beach district of San Francisco. A crowd gathered outside blocks some traffic as they wait, listening to the sounds emanating from the club. Inside, the capacity audience moves along with the music of the Cannonball Adderley Quintet. Whistles, yells, shouts, and applause fill the space between numbers. Adderley addresses the audience from the stage:

Thank you very much, ladies and gentleman. Now it’s time to carry on some—if we could have lights out, please, for atmosphere. Now we’re about to play a new composition by our pianist, Bobby Timmons. This one is a jazz waltz, howev’r it has all sorts of properties. It’s simultaneously a shout and a chant, depending upon whether you know anything about the roots of church music and all that kind of stuff—meaning soul church music—I don’t mean, ah, Bach chorales, and so, that’s different. You know what I mean? This is soul, you know what I mean? You know what I mean? All right. Now we’re going to play this by Bobby Timmons. It’s really called, “This Here.” Howev’r for reasons of soul and description, we have corrupted it to become: “Dish ‘ere.” So that’s the name: “Dish ‘ere.” [Music begins.]

During his set, Adderley pauses every now and then to acknowledge the presence of the audience. His tone is conversational, his comments informative. His announcement is peppered with questions to no one in particular, yet they speak to everyone—“You know what I mean? All right.” These are the sounds of The Cannonball Adderley Quintet in San Francisco, a 1959 LP issued by Riverside Records.
Adderley’s introduction to “This Here” is a multilayered performative moment. The purposeful “corruption” of the tune’s title, from “This Here” to “Dish ‘ere,” makes unequivocal connections to a history of black expressive culture that grounds the quintet’s musical approach. His use of the word soul—“I don’t mean, ah, Bach chorales and so, that’s different”—distances his church-inspired music from white Anglican traditions and places his performance within an entangled set of ideologies surrounding late-1950s jazz. By the time of the October 1959 recording at the Jazz Workshop, “soul” had become a buzzword within the jazz industry. Soul jazz was a burgeoning sub-genre, a musical style bolstered by Adderley’s commercial success. His usage of “soul” does musical, cultural, and commercial work, like much of his music would do in the years to come. Like other jazz at the end of the 1950s, Quintet in San Francisco explicitly embraced black popular culture on several levels.1

Adderley’s 1959 LP was the saxophonist’s first live recording and it became a sensation. By May 1960, according to a profile in Time magazine, the LP had sold over 50,000 copies and the 45-rpm single of “This Here” was a surprise jukebox hit.2 In comparison, other Riverside albums by luminaries such as Thelonious Monk and Bill Evans from this period reportedly sold around a thousand copies apiece.3 The surprising

2 “Music: Cannonball,” Time, 30 May 1960. The 45-rpm single split the recording of “This Here” between the A- and B-sides.
sales from *Quintet in San Francisco* launched Adderley onto the national stage and into the homes of thousands of listeners beyond those already familiar with his work on EmArcy and Riverside Records. Though Adderley was already well-known in jazz circles having joined John Coltrane as a sideman with the Miles Davis sextet, the success of *Quintet In San Francisco* made Adderley the biggest selling act on Riverside and a legitimate star in his own right. For the first time, Adderley won the *Down Beat* critics’ and readers’ polls for top alto saxophonist of the year. He received increased media attention outside of jazz circles, including profiles in national magazines and newspapers.4 This success led to other commercial opportunities. In May 1960, for example, he recorded the music for a TV commercial for Prell Shampoo.5 His next live LP on Riverside, *The Cannonball Adderley Quintet at the Lighthouse* (1960) received 50,000 advanced orders and in the years following, he recorded a string of jukebox hits including “Sack o’ Woe,” “Work Song,” and “African Waltz,” the later of which became his first single to crack Billboards Hot 100, peaking at number forty one.6

Adderley’s announcements from stage, like the one described above, would become an aural trademark. His ease and overall jovial demeanor on stage, a memorable part of his artistic persona and musical sound, welcomed listeners by giving them access to the stories behind the music. The accompanying crowd reaction captured on record—the

4 For a more detailed look at the *Down Beat* polls from this time, see: Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call out to Jazz and Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 66–67.  
6 Ibid., 80.
applause, yells, shouts, and other vocalizations—brought listeners into the space of music making. The notes to Quintet in San Francisco, written by jazz critic Ralph Gleason, similarly situate the music within the club environment through depictions of the capacity crowd, commentary on individual listeners, and descriptions of the audience’s animated reactions to Adderley’s music. These visual and aural elements, taken together, work to construct the record as an event unfolding at a particular time and place, and a window into the social spaces of music making.

This chapter contextualizes Quintet in San Francisco within the musical and technological history of the live jazz record. Adderley’s record sits at a point of intersection between the record industry’s experiments with the live LP and jazz’s place in 1950s black popular culture. Through my historical analysis of on-location recording in jazz clubs, particularly in how different values of record production reflected divergent sub-genres of the music, I expand on scholarship that relates Adderley’s music to aspects of the black community. Recording jazz on location in nightclubs, I argue, captured the interactions between music, musicians, and audience members, thereby producing a form of black sociality on record.

Adderley’s LP serves as a jumping off place to trace the history of live jazz record during the 1950s. First, I outline how jazz musicians re-solidified their relationship with black music through the development of hard bop and trace how its growth happened in conjunction with the live jazz record. Next, I situate the jazz club as a recording space, understanding these venues through the relationship between technology and technician. I then turn to the records, first through analysis of the visual content such as liner notes
and graphic design. Finally, I examine Adderley’s record is sonic terms, outlining how the sonic sociality of the jazz club translated onto record through musicians’ voices and their audible interactions with the audience.

**Hard Bop and The Long-Playing Record**

“Hi Fly,” the first track on Side 2 of *Quintet in San Francisco*, begins with a brief explanation of the composition from Adderley. Some indiscernible talking and other club noises serve as backdrop to his speech. Halfway through the performance and during the cornet solo, someone—likely Adderley—begins snapping their fingers on the backbeats, mimicking Louis Hayes’s high-hat (4:50). At several other moments, a “yeah” or another exclamation rises to surface in reaction to the music. The snapping continues into Timmons’s piano solo, accompanied from start to finish by an undefined yet clearly present rustling of the audience.

Live records seem to simultaneously give access to exceptional performative moments and music as it happens in the everyday. Since the audience has paid for the privilege of being there, the musicians are under pressure to perform and act within the everyday commerce of professionalized music. Live jazz recordings give a sense of mastery over this musical moment, when the financial and artistic stakes are high and the

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7 Years later Keepnews wrote: “[Adderley] was a big man and a joyous man. He was a player and a composer and a leader, and when someone else was soling he was snapping his fingers and showing his enjoyment.” Orrin Keepnews, *The View from Within: Jazz Writings, 1948-1987* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 202.
musicians must rise to the occasion. There are no second takes, no false starts, and no chances to fix mistakes. The sonic presence of the performance venue was vital to this construction, since the interactions between musicians, music, and audience give an aural presence of a particular space and place. They are the sounds of an everyday sociality. As live records began appearing in the 1950s, the sounds of the jazz club began circulating as well on live records by Adderley and other hard bop musicians.

I understand hard bop as a loosely defined category of jazz that thrived during a fifteen-year period between 1954 and 1969. Though the majority of hard bop musicians grew up listening to Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and other bebop musicians, many of their first professional experiences were with rhythm and blues bands operating in the black popular sphere. This had an enormous impact on jazz in the 1950s, as hard bop

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9 Several scholars have written about the shifting boundaries of hard bop. David Rosenthal prefers a four-tier taxonomy to account for the different styles of music and the musicians who often had strong disagreements regarding musical aesthetics. Heavily influenced by Rosenthal’s observations, but not necessarily his taxonomy, other scholars prefer to understand the porous boundaries of hard bop as a cultural strategy of political resistance. Scott Saul, for example, defines hard bop as a “web of affiliations” through record labels and performance venues. The social network, he believes, produced music relevant to the black community by musicians’ explorations and uses of musical characteristics at the “roots of the black experience.” Mark Anthony Neal reads hard bop in terms of the “Black Popular Sphere” (i.e., black popular culture), accentuating how musicians were able to successfully leverage growing trends in mass consumerism to increase their cultural capital. Ingrid Monson defines hard bop in historical terms, as a development that places black musical experience and cultural poetics at the center of its aesthetic. Pushing back against racialized assumptions about the singular importance of rhythm to black music, she usefully advocates for the centrality of harmony to hard bop as well. Rosenthal, *Hard Bop*, 44; Scott Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), xii; Mark Anthony Neal, *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 29–31; Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 12, 66–71, 99–106.

came to look both forward and back: forward in how musicians absorbed bebop’s cultural politics and improvisatory language; backward in how they sought to reclaim musical elements of the black church and the black working class. The style known as hard bop became closely associated with spaces of the black community and sites of what Guthrie Ramsey has labeled “community theaters” of everyday blackness. Black audiences interacted with jazz during live performances and through jukeboxes located at local bars, nightclubs, juke joints, and venues on the so-called Chitlin’ Circuit. The bandstand was one location where social practices and cultural poetics met, circulating the music through black popular culture. Hard bop, then, is a shorthand description with an embedded sense of racial politics based around an aesthetic of community and sociality.

As a well-trodden topic in jazz studies, hard bop continues to, in many ways, define the center of the jazz canon at mid-century among diverse populations of jazz listeners. Much less attention, however, has been given to how recording technology, record production, and the attendant rise of a new era of music consumerism affected the music’s circulation. Many iconic hard bop records on Blue Note, Prestige, Riverside, and other independents, for example, emerged at the precise moment that the jazz industry fully

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11 Saul, Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t, 2–3. Elsewhere Saul characterizes the musicians as “profound jazz historians as well, lucid in ways that challenge the most assiduous listeners” (xii). For a thorough discussion of hard bop’s racial and musical aesthetics in relation to other genres at the time see: Monson, Freedom Sounds, 69–78, 98.
14 For more on mass consumerism within the United States during this era, see: Tim J. Anderson, Making Easy Listening: Material Culture and Postwar American Recording (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); and Lizabeth Cohen, A Consumer’s Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America (New York: Knopf, 2003).
adopted the 12-inch LP and 45 single as the dominant recording formats (discussed in chapter 1). This transition in musical media also coincided with the rise of the live jazz record, including those made by hard bop musicians at small jazz clubs. Such experiments in record making defined the terrain of the music’s circulation.

Mark Anthony Neal is among the few to explicitly connect the role of mass-market record making to the development of hard bop. Pointing to how R&B became the first form of black popular music to benefit from the market boom of mass-produced recordings, Neal explicates hard bop as one of the few jazz sub-genres to articulate an urban blackness within this market. With focused analysis on records from the 1960s, Neal argues that the live aspects of such recordings presented the “intimate relationships” between black artists and their audiences. These artists can also be understood through what Alexander Weheliye formulates as “sonic Afro-modernity,” the various black cultural practices expressed and mediated through sonic technologies. Weheliye does not consider the structures of record distribution or hard bop in particular. However, his conception of sonic Afro-modernity is nevertheless useful for understanding Adderley’s

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music as part of the technological formation and circulation of black expressive cultures in the postwar era.

By considering Adderley’s music (and hard bop more generally) in relation to these new sonic technologies and modes of circulation, I contend that the ability to record on-location also made it possible to encode a black sociality and the acoustics of its performative spaces into the vinyl grooves of the emerging LP market. Since LPs were fundamentally audiovisual objects, these live discs also newly explored the tension between the ephemerality of music and the materiality of audio technologies. If the development of mass-produced recording at the end of the nineteenth century created a rupture between the sound and its source, then the increased attention to the visual design during the LP era signaled a re-materialization of those sources.17 For jazz, and for Adderley’s music in particular, this re-materialization happened within the boundaries of a commercial marketplace that largely essentialized blackness in terms of “vernacular” culture. Adderley’s records challenged this racialized construction through sonic means.

The three most important independent jazz record labels of the 1950s, Blue Note, Prestige, and Riverside, initially began as specialty labels catering to record collectors. As a result, the popular music market did not drive their output and artist roster.18 However by

18 Blue Note was founded in 1939. Prestige appeared a decade later, in 1949, followed by Riverside in 1953.
the mid-1950s, roughly coinciding with the emergence of hard bop, these labels changed their approach and began issuing 45-rpm singles in order to target jukebox operators and black radio stations.\(^9\) Though few jazz records appeared on the national R&B or Top 100 charts during this time, jukeboxes and black radio stations increasingly featured the records of Jimmy Smith, Art Blakey, and Cannonball Adderley alongside popular artists signed to Atlantic, Chess, and Mercury. The increased attention given to African American consumers gave some jazz musicians more control over personnel and repertory, even though most record producers were white men from the United States or first generation immigrants.\(^{20}\) More control for jazz musicians increased the speed of hard bop’s development and also created an influx of original jazz compositions now considered *de rigueur*.\(^{21}\) On record, the originals usually fell between five and nine minutes, with a tendency towards minor keys and medium tempos.

At the same time that independent record labels began targeting black audiences, live recordings proliferated throughout the jazz industry. The types of live recording, however, changed drastically depending on what label, venue, and musical sub-genre. Independent record labels featuring hard bop musicians recorded almost exclusively in

\(^{9}\) Blue Note historian and record producer Michael Cuscuna told David Rosenthal that the average sales for Blue Note’s singles were 3,000 to jukebox operators and around 1,000 to “individuals in black neighborhoods.” The label also sent discs to black radio stations. Joe Fields, who worked for Prestige during this time, similarly said that most of that label’s records were sold to black audiences. Rosenthal, *Hard Bop*, 62–65.

\(^{20}\) For example, Nesuhi and Ahmet Ertegun, founders of Atlantic Records, were born in Istanbul, Turkey. The co-founder of Blue Note, Alfred Lion, was born in Berlin, Germany. The head of popular albums for Columbia Records during this time, George Avakian, was born in Armavir, Russia. Prestige’s Bob Weinstock and Riverside’s Orrin Keepnews were born in 1928 and 1923, respectively, and both grew up in New York City.

the small, intimate space of the jazz club. Most live jazz records appearing on these labels between 1951 and 1958 were recorded in New York City or another metropolis along the Eastern corridor (from Boston to the District of Columbia).\textsuperscript{22} This included well known clubs in the New York City metropolitan area such as The Cafe Bohemia, The Five Spot, Birdland, Smalls Paradise, and The Village Vanguard, as well as the Pershing Lounge (Chicago), The Spotlight (Washington DC), The London House (Chicago), Storyville (Boston), and the Blackhawk (San Francisco). Certain clubs like the Village Vanguard became popular locations to record among many different companies, creating a national reputation for those venues and producing many iconic records.\textsuperscript{23}

In contrast, the mainstream swing artists that dominated the major labels at the time—artists like Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, Ella Fitzgerald, and Duke Ellington—generally recorded in large concert halls in front of crowds that numbered in the thousands.\textsuperscript{24} Verve and Columbia similarly recorded at the 1956, 1957, and 1958 Newport Jazz Festival, an outdoor venue with large crowds. Examples include Ellington at Newport (1956), Louis Armstrong’s Ambassador Satch (1955), Billy Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald at Newport (1958), Ella Fitzgerald’s At the Opera House (1956), Lena Horne at the Waldorf Astoria (1957), as well as records by Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Lionel

\textsuperscript{22} Fantasy Records, a label based in San Francisco, was the major exception to this.

\textsuperscript{23} The most notable records from the Village Vanguard are two Bill Evans LPs from 1960, Sunday at The Village Vanguard and Waltz for Debby, as well as John Coltrane’s ‘Live’ at The Village Vanguard (1961), recorded for Riverside and Impulse!, respectively.

\textsuperscript{24} Some exceptions are Buddy Rich in Miami (1958) and Gene Krupa at The London House (1959), both issued by Verve Records.
Hampton, and Roy Eldridge as part of Norman Granz’s Jazz at the Philharmonic (JAPT). During the mid-1950s, labels recorded at Carnegie Hall (New York), The Shrine Auditorium (Los Angeles), Medina Temple (Chicago), and similar halls in other major US cities. By the early 1960s, recordings made in European concert halls also began appearing with greater frequency as jazz musicians found success with audiences abroad.

Production decisions about how to sonically represent the audience on record differed along similar lines. Mainstream artists recorded by the major labels generally featured a crowd en masse, heard only at the beginning and end of a particular track. Recall from chapter 2 that Columbia producer George Avakian’s post-production edits on Ellington at Newport created a much larger audience than what sounded on the original tapes. Onstage announcements from musicians were rare except in the case of vocalists, who on occasion would briefly introduce the upcoming song. Live hard bop records, in contrast, featured individual voices and audible exclamations of audience members reacting to specific moments of music making. Instrumentalists could be heard introducing the band members or telling anecdotes about the repertory. Though these discrepancies were certainly the result of the acoustical differences between performance venues, the contrasting sound worlds reflected an intentional variance in audio production values as well. Live hard bop records reproduced the sociocultural

25 I discuss Granz’s live JAPT records in more detail in chapter 3. The JAPT LPs also featured bebop musicians such as Dizzy Gillespie and Sonny Stitt, but not the hard bop musicians discussed in this chapter.
relationships among listeners invested in the communal aesthetics central to many black expressive cultures.

No company released more live records in the mid-1950s than Blue Note Records. This proliferation of live records coincided with the label’s transition to the 12-inch LP, which began in 1955 with the launch of their “Modern Jazz” BLP 1500 series. Nine of their first thirty 12-inch LPs in this series were live records from East Coast jazz clubs, primarily in New York City. This included *The Jazz Messengers at the Cafe Bohemia Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2*, *Jutta Hipp at the Hickory House Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2*, Art Blakey’s *A Night at Birdland Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2*, Kenny Dorham’s ‘Round About Midnight at the Cafe Bohemia*, and *The Incredible Jimmy Smith at Club Baby Grand Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2.*26 By the time Blue Note’s 12-inch catalog reached one hundred releases in 1957, Blue Note had added several more, including Sonny Rollins’s *A Night at the Village Vanguard*, and Jimmy Smith’s *Groovin’ at Smalls’ Paradise Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2.*

These records included onstage announcements from musicians and club emcees, vocal interactions among band and audience members, and lengthy liner notes that described the makeup of the audience. During club dates it was common for jazz groups to play short, easily identifiable theme songs at the end of their set, what could be described as a sonic tag to the performance. Many bandleaders used these moments to announce the group’s personnel or to thank the audience for their patronage. Blue Note

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26 Blue Note initially issued *A Night at Birdland* as three 10-inch LPs. The 12-inch discs mentioned here had the same content as their 10-inch counterparts. Both 10- and 12-inch versions had the same cover design and liner notes.
often put these performance codas at the end of their live LPs in an attempt to give the record the impression of a live performance. By the end of the decade, nearly every independent jazz label had made at least one live record from a jazz club. Many of these records copied Blue Note’s production techniques and approach to sound.

Reflecting on the label many years later, Keepnews described Riverside as the “feisty younger brother” of Blue Note and Prestige. As Riverside grew, Keepnews recalls that the label fought for its “proper share of attention in an family of three aggressive New York-based independent jazz labels.”

Though the company had shipped their first LPs in December 1952, Riverside at that time mostly dealt in reissues of older recordings. The label’s approach changed in the mid-1950s when they began producing records by Thelonious Monk, Bill Evans, Abby Lincoln, Wes Montgomery, Randy Weston, and Cannonball Adderley. This transition coincided with Riverside’s adoption of the 12-inch LP as the label vied for their share of the jazz LP market. Keepnews later wrote that the “full-scale life” of Riverside began with Thelonious Monk Plays The Music Of Duke Ellington, an album recorded in July 1955. Released as the first disc in the label’s Contemporary 12-200 series, the label’s designation for their newly recorded artists, Monk Plays Ellington was also among the first 12-inch LPs issued by the label.

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27 Keepnews, liner notes to The Riverside Records story, 9.
28 Ibid., 10.
29 The “12” in “RLP 12-200” stands for 12-inch LP, a designation later dropped when Riverside stopped issuing 10-inch LPs. The label had a concurrent 12-inch LP series titled the Riverside Jazz Archives RLP 100 series, focused specifically on reissues of artist like Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Ma Rainey, James P. Johnson, and others.
Riverside recorded their first live record in October 1956 at New York City’s Cafe Bohemia, featuring pianist Randy Weston. The disc, titled *Jazz à la Bohemia*, followed in the footsteps of Blue Note, which had already issued three LPs recorded at the Cafe Bohemia in 1955 and 1956: *The Jazz Messengers at the Cafe Bohemia, Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2* (1956) and *'Round About Midnight at the Cafe Bohemia*. Debut Records, a short-lived company owned by bassist Charles Mingus, had similarly recorded at the Bohemia in December 1955, a session that produced *Mingus At The Bohemia*. The liner notes to Riverside’s *Jazz à la Bohemia* includes references to these records, showing the label’s awareness of the industry trends at the time.30 Riverside would not record another live LP until 1958, when they went into NYC’s Five Spot to record Thelonious Monk and saxophonist Pepper Adams. From these sessions, Riverside issued three live LPs that same year.31

When Riverside went into the Jazz Workshop in October 1959 to record Cannonball Adderley, listeners had many options for consuming live jazz records. Blue Note, Columbia, Fantasy, Atlantic, Chess, Riverside, and Verve had all recorded and released their first on-location recordings from jazz clubs.32 Many of these same companies had also issued live LPs recorded in concert halls and jazz festivals, making the live album an increasingly important genre of recorded jazz. The changing visual and aural set of

30 Orrin Keepnews, liner notes to *Jazz à la Bohemia*, Randy Weston, Riverside RLP 12-232, LP (12in), 1956.
32 Some examples include: *Lennie Tristano* (1955) and *The Real Lee Konitz* (1957) on Atlantic; *Buddy Rich in Miami* (1957) on Verve; and *But Not for Me: Ahmad Jamal Trio at The Pershing* (1958) on Argo (Chess). Prestige, which issued one of the first live jazz club records in 1952, Wardell Grey’s *Jazz Concert*, released their second live record in 1959: *Red Garland at the Prelude*.
aesthetic parameters that surrounded the adoption of and the adaptation to the long-playing record implicates a changing ideology of recording jazz. Attempting to parse out the cultural forces at work behind the proliferation of commercial live recordings reveals the technological, musical, and entrepreneurial agency behind the circulation of jazz during this era.

**Recording the 1950s Jazz Club**

Seconds into the first track of *Quintet in San Francisco*, Adderley begins to speak. His voice, though clearly audible, is faint and sounds in the background. Individual and group laughter, some applause, and other murmurs from the club accompany Adderley’s words, revealing a lively feeling among those present at the Jazz Workshop. Recall his introduction to “This Here” that opened the set:

[Applause.] Thank you very much, ladies in gentleman. [Audience murmurs continue beneath.] Now it’s time to carry on some—if we could have lights out, please, for atmosphere. [Pause. Murmurs continue.] Now we’re about to play a new composition by our pianist, Bobby Timmons. This one is a jazz waltz, howev’r it has all sorts of properties. It’s simultaneously a shout and a chant, depending upon whether you know anything about the roots of church music.

Asking to dim lights (“for atmosphere”) signals a moment of transition as the club moves from a gathering space to a performance venue. As the audience’s presumed focus shifts from socializing to listening, the volume of Adderley’s voice increases. This change is technological, an adjustment in the audio signal by the sound engineer at the mixing board. This audible shift lasts four seconds, beginning twenty-five seconds into the track—by the time he says, “it’s simultaneously a shout and a chant,” Adderley’s voice has moved to the foreground and it remains so through the rest of his address.
This signal adjustment is unmistakably audible on record, though it is unclear how such sounds relate to the actual performance space. Did this adjustment accompany the lighting change? (Were there changes in lighting?) Did the audience at the club and the musicians hear this adjustment or does it sound only on record? Who actually turned the knob to increase the volume and at what point did he—and it is a “he”—realize the problem? How can the engineer’s improvised adjustment be understood in relation to Adderley’s music on stage? How did this moment come to be kept on record?

Jazz clubs were not ideal locations in which to record. Acoustics varied wildly from location to location, as did the space available to set up the necessary recording equipment. When Argo went into the Pershing lounge in 1958 to record Ahmad Jamal, for example, the only place to fit the equipment in the small lounge was in the liquor room, an enclosed space away from the stage.33 When producer Michael Cuscuna recorded Dexter Gordon’s US homecoming at the Village Vanguard in 1976, he set up his equipment in the tiny kitchen, a strategy he learned from previous producers and engineers who cut records at the iconic club.34 These small, out-of-the-way places were also chosen because they enabled the engineer (and/or producer) to clearly hear the mix through their headphones and properly adjust the audio signal being recorded. Still, their inability to see the stage, control the acoustics of the performance space, or anticipate the spontaneous and noise interventions of the audience made recording difficult, especially compared to a

34 Michael Cuscuna, interview with the author, November 2011.
professional recording studio. In those spaces, producer and engineer sat in the control room behind a glass wall, sonically isolated but with a clear vision of the musical space. The studio provides more control over sound through technology.

The limitations of recording equipment in the 1950s meant that on-location recording sessions had to be planned well in advance. Rudy Van Gelder, the engineer who recorded the first live recordings for Blue Note in the mid-1950s, recalled in a 2012 interview with Marc Myers how it took three days to set up, record, and break down his equipment. Van Gelder recalled how he brought a portable version of the Ampex 300-2 from his studio along with the necessary microphones:

The Ampex [300-2] allowed me to record musicians live—during concerts and at clubs. I started doing that for Blue Note during the club date we just discussed [Art Blakey at Birdland]. Alfred [Lion] always liked the energy and excitement of a live performance at night, but it would take me three days to record it. I’d have to take apart the studio and pack all the equipment into my car, drive to the venue, set up the equipment, record the musicians, and then break down everything and bring it all back to my studio in Hackensack—before my next session.35

There were several versions of the Ampex 300 mentioned by Van Gelder. First introduced in 1949, the regular sized Ampex 300 became one of the standard pieces of equipment in the early 1950s. The mono tape reels and recorder of this unit were roughly the size of a stackable washer, dryer—small enough to fit comfortably in a control room but certainly not portable by car. Ampex’s portable version of the 300, released sometime in the early 1950s, came in two parts that were each the size of a large suitcase. Though certainly not convenient, the portable Ampex 300 was small enough to be packed into a car and set up

on a regular-sized table. The microphones, cables, stands, tape reels, and other equipment were easily portable as well, though time consuming to set up and take down, as Van Gelder describes.36

According to producer Orrin Keepnews, there were several issues Riverside had to overcome during the making of Quintet in San Francisco. Keepnews initially planned to do a studio session of the Adderley quintet, but San Francisco had no professional recording studios at that time. Having already done several live recordings in New York, Keepnews decided to record Adderley on-location at the Jazz Workshop, especially after hearing the audience’s reaction to “This Here.” Still, there were not many engineers in San Francisco that, in Keepnews’s words, had “a command of the fledgling art of recording ‘live’ in a club.”37 Keepnews later wrote on a 1989 CD reissue that Quintet in San Francisco was “something of a pioneering effort in on-the-job recording. It’s tremendous success led us (and other jazz labels) to do many more, and we all eventually learned how to make such ‘live’ sessions better organized—although certainly not any more exciting.”38

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36 The “-2” in “Ampex 300-2” likely refers to the number of tracks available to record. Before the commercial adoption of stereophonic discs at the end of the 1950s, engineers often used two-track recorders to create the eventual monaural discs. The details remain vague because, even to this day, Van Gelder closely guards the secrets of his equipment and techniques. Some particulars can be found in: Jim Cogan, Temples of Sound: Inside the Great Recording Studios (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2003), 193–206.
37 Keepnews, The View from Within, 202. He eventually found an engineer, Reice Hamel, on recommendation of Dick Block of Pacific records.
The recorded sounds of *Quintet in San Francisco* tell a similar story, one that runs contrary to the claims of “high fidelity” that appear several times on the back jacket.\(^{39}\) Along with the adjustment of Adderley’s voice noted above, the record includes several moments of audible distortion. Such overloaded audio signal can be heard during Nat Adderley’s long, high notes on “Spontaneous Combustion” (5:00), Louis Hayes’s bass drum hits on the melody to “High Fly” (1:00), and the band’s closing theme to “You Got it!” (4:30). During each of these moments the sound distorts as a result of the input signal exceeding the limits of the recording device, what audio professionals refer to as “clipping.” At several points in the disc, usually for just a moment, the sonic profile becomes muddy and distorted, making individual sounds much harder to identify. Several of Bobby Timmon’s piano solos create a similar effect. On “Hi-Fly,” for example, Timmons quotes the standard “I’m Beginning to See the Light” several moments into his solo, inspiring a heavy backbeat from Hayes (beginning at 7:30). Both Timmon’s heavy-handed improvisation and Hayes’s accompaniment sonically overwhelm the equipment. Recording engineers usually adjust the input levels before recording to avoid such signal distortion. Like the outdoor festivals at Newport discussed in chapter 2, however, the mixing of such live recordings had to be done on site. Reice Hamel, the engineer of *Quintet in San Francisco*, clearly did not anticipate or properly set his recording levels to account for Timmons or Hayes’s playing.

\(^{39}\) *Quintet in San Francisco* included the phrase “high fidelity” in two places: in the upper left hand corner under the label name and at the end of the liner notes among other technical notes about producer, visual artist, and photographer. The bottom of the back jacket also had this phrase: “This record will provide highest quality sound reproduction on both standard long-play and Stereophonic playback systems.”
An inexperienced sound engineer, however, was only partially to blame. Many LPs made in the mid-to-late 1950s mention technological difficulties while making on-location recordings. On Riverside’s first live record from 1956, Randy Weston’s *Jazz à la Bohemia*, the liner notes by Orrin Keepnews highlight the jazz club as a place of musical experimentation and artistic freedom. In doing so, they also note the challenges of on-location recording:

There is a growing (if still limited) tendency towards on-the-spot recording. This means sacrificing something of acoustics, freedom from distraction and overall control of the situation, in hopes of catching your performance on a good, truly live night. In the present case, the negative elements were minimized by the fact the Bohemia is an unhectic place and that Riverside’s staff engineer, Ray Fowler, is an unhectic, highly skilled and sensitive technician. Also, the key musicians of the evening, Weston and baritone sax man Cecil Payne, are both exciting, inventive artists with a good deal to say.40

Writing in 1960, Riverside liner notes author Chris Albertson summed it up like this:

In this era of the LP and of tape, the recording of jazz during actual club or concert performances has become a quite frequent occurrence. But while this can often result in a musically better and more exciting record, it can also often mean the quality of the sound has to be sacrificed at least to a degree, because of the difficulties of setting up microphones on location, the questionable acoustic of many clubs and similar technical pitfalls.41

Recording in a studio gave engineers and producers control over many variables of sound, be it properly miking the drums or balancing the ensemble during a change between soloists. Flubbed notes and breakdowns could easily be redone and fixed. On-location recording, in contrast, offered great potential for capturing an exceptional performance,

40 Keepnews, liner notes to *Jazz à la Bohemia*.
41 Chris Albertson, liner notes to *Studio Jazz Party*, Johnny Griffin, Riverside RLP 338, LP (12in), 1960.
yet provided a technically more challenging recording environment. Limits of control and freedom over the recording situation were a common theme in the discussions of on-location recordings such as these. As Albertson points out, the musical result of such recordings had to make up for the difficulties of set up, uneven acoustics, and other unpredictable factors.

The musical and technological risks involved in recording jazz on location, however, were also a selling point for record companies. On Jazz à la Bohemia, Keepnews includes a description of the equipment in the first paragraph on his liner notes: “One evening in the Fall of 1956 . . . Riverside unloaded a station-wagon full of recording equipment into the club and settled down to several hours of taping a live performance by Weston and his colleagues. The results of that evening make up this album.” Keepnews goes on specifically name the engineer, Ray Fowler, as the creative agent and expert technician behind the technology. By accentuating the roles of such technological agents in overcoming the difficulties of capturing the “live” moments on record, the notes present the LP as a cooperative effort between musician, engineer, producer, and record company, with the club as the common space of artistic labor. Keepnews finishes the notes by discussing the Cafe Bohemia as one of the top jazz clubs on the East Coast, but does so in

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42 Keepnews, liner notes to Jazz à la Bohemia. A similar description appears on Lena Horne at the Waldorf Astoria (1957): “On the evening of February twentieth RCA Victor set up microphone and equipment in the Empire Room and recorded the exciting performance you hear in this album. It is Lena Horne at her best—electrifying and dynamic as she sings for an audience—projecting all the fire and vibrance of her personality.” Liner notes to Lena Horne at the Waldorf Astoria, Lena Horne, RCA Victor LOC-1028, LP (12in), 1957.
relation to the other on-location recordings from the club on the Blue Note, Debut, and Progressive labels.43

One of these records, Kenny Dorham’s 1956 ‘Round Midnight at the Cafe Bohemia, includes a similar description of technology and technician. Liner notes author Leonard Feather praises engineer Rudy Van Gelder in particular: “The session was recorded May 31, 1956 at the Cafe Bohemia, where Alfred Lion, armed only with the redoubtable Rudy Van Gelder and with a battery of microphones, tape reels, and recording equipment, stormed the Barrow Street citadel and won a bloodless victory in several hours of concentrated cutting.”44 The liner notes to Blue Note’s 1954 A Night At Birdland With Art Blakey Quintet, also written by Feather, similarly describe Van Gelder as “an engineer who understand jazz and knows how to balance it” and for creating a disc that “truly captures the spirit of the occasion and atmosphere on the world’s most rhythmic aviary.”45 Feather’s liner notes to Jutta Hipp’s At the Hickory House (1956) similarly names the “masterful engineering job” of Van Gelder and praises the “ready assistance volunteered by Josh and Howard Popkin of the Hickory House.”46 Like Keepnews, Feather’s descriptions focuses on the

43 These records are: The Jazz Messengers at the Cafe Bohemia (Vol. 1 and 2), ‘Round About Midnight at the Cafe Bohemia, Mingus at the Bohemia, and George Wallington Quintet at the Bohemia Featuring the Peck (1955). All records were recorded in 1956 except where noted.
44 Leonard Feather, liner notes to Round About Midnight at The Cafe Bohemia, Kenny Dorham, Blue Note BLP 1524, LP (12in), 1956.
45 Leonard Feather, liner notes to A Night at Birdland with the Art Blakey Quintet, Vol. 1, Art Blakey, Blue Note BLP 5037, LP (10in), 1954.
46 Leonard Feather, liner notes to Jutta Hipp at The Hickory House, Vol. 1, Jutta Hipp, Blue Note BLP 1515, LP (12in), 1956. The full quote is as follows: “Thanks to the ready assistance volunteered by Josh and Howard Popkin of the Hickory House, and a masterful engineering job by the indispensable Rudy van Gelder, two entire LPs were recorded in one highly productive evening at the club.”
technology and technician working together, a conception of record making that places technological possibility, engineer’s play, and commercial cooperation at its center.

Reproducing musical performance on record is a process with inherent contradictions, especially for a music like jazz where listeners both value the spontaneity of the performative moment and valorize the culture of records. When record companies began producing live records made in jazz clubs, the very category of the jazz record—the ontology of the jazz album—was in the process of changing. Record labels had to experiment with how to package and present these recorded documents to their potential listeners. Engineers, too, started to build reputations around their ability to quickly adapt to circumstances unknown; their technical virtuosity became a part of this history just as their choices made behind the recording console established conventions for what jazz clubs sounded like on record. These narratives of technology and technician, music and musician appear as a storied encounter of a performance, curated through the channels of commerce surrounding 1950s jazz. They are documents beholden to the values that surrounded the site of performance and its potential for record making. As commercial products, these records cannot be removed from the market that surrounds them.

Adderley’s Quintet in San Francisco presents an opportunity to unearth how this contradiction manifested itself after a decade of enormous technological change within

the jazz industry. When Gleason writes that, “I only hope that some portion of this comes through to you in hearing this album so that you may share this enjoyment,” the technology becomes a vehicle for listening to and understanding the spaces of music making. The adjustment of Adderley’s voice that begins the record, however brief, reveals a technological layer to the jazz club and the spontaneity of the recording process. Mistakes and imperfections, be it a misjudgment in recording level, an errant bass drum, or a fluffed note, become part of the story of how jazz musicians, producers, and engineers simultaneously negotiated the shifting landscape of the music business, the social dynamics of music making, and the acoustics of the space. As the first recording of his new quintet, the record was a musical experiment in Adderley’s artistic sound. As a live record, it was a commercial experiment in how to package an emergent form of music making that newly embraced an un-apologetically black aesthetic.

Capturing the Jazz Club, Part 1: Visual Representations

On the opening track of Quintet in San Francisco, there is a brief moment of respite after Cannonball Adderley finishes his solo and before his brother, Nat, begins to play (5:25). In this break, a singular “yeah” emerges from the applause, filling the space left behind by Cannonball’s exit. About a half-minute later, with Nat in full swing, someone else intones “that’s right.” Other individuals murmur in response. Later, someone starts clapping along, regularly hitting in rhythm to beats two and five of the catchy 6/4 vamp (6:50). This clapping returns during Bobby Timmons’s piano solo. Another sound emerges: “ughhhhhhhhhhhhhhh, huh”—“ughhhhhhhhhhhhh, huh” (9:50).
These unidentified vocalizations reveal interplay between music, musician, and audience. Other sounds, too, help create a sense of the shared musical moment: the rustle of the audience that opens the record, someone snapping along to the music, the vocal exclamations after a solo, and other indiscriminate sounds of club. Taken together, these sounds cultivate a listening experience based around the interactions between people in a particular space and at a particular time. Live recordings, in this sense, are not only about the musical sounds but also the sets of relationships that those sounds can be demonstrated to figure.\(^48\) Even in relation to one another, such sounds only reveal so much. Consider Adderley’s opening remarks:

[Applause.] Thank you very much, ladies in gentleman. Now it’s time to carry on some. If we could have lights out, please, for atmosphere. [Pause.] Now we’re about to play a new composition by our pianist, Bobby Timmons.

The first sounds heard on the record are not Adderley’s words, but the faint buzz of the audience that point to a particular moment of music making outside of the recording studio. While they erase the non-space of the studio, however, these sounds still do not place the music in a specific time or location. Despite their specificity, they remain anonymous.

Six words in the bottom left-hand corner of Quintet in San Francisco’s cover fill in the details: “RECORDED LIVE AT THE JAZZ WORKSHOP.” The small green lettering hovers right above the feet of Cannonball, who appears to be mid-speech standing with his saxophone hanging from his neck and looking down at his brother, Nat, seated in a

\(^{48}\) My reading here is influenced by Hayden White, “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact,” CLIO 3, no. 3 (1974): 294.
chair. Written in the smallest font on the cover, the phrase places the record in a specific club and, along with the title, in a specific city. Credits on the back cover, placed just below the title, name the two recording dates as October 18 and 19, 1959. The first sentence of Ralph Gleason’s liner notes adds further particulars:

When the CANNONBALL ADDERLEY QUINTET finished Hi-Fly—its closing number after a four week engagement at The Jazz Workshop in San Francisco in October of 1959—the audience stood and cheered and whistled and clapped for fifteen minutes.49

Gleason then describes the scene in and outside the club, comparing the Jazz Workshop to the famous jazz venues along 52nd street in New York City.50 Adderley’s quintet, Gleason writes, filled the Jazz Workshop with “contagious” rhythms that, with so many bodies in motion, made the performance space resemble “a church as much as a jazz club.” The specifics of these visual elements construct this album as a historically significant event.

These liner notes appear as a result of the commercial structures that surround this music and its consumption. Gleason, a nationally syndicated jazz critic, regularly contributed to the culture of print capitalism that made jazz a viable business in the 1950s. The small green letters naming the Jazz Workshop on the front cover appear as a result of design work by individuals named on the record: Paul Bacon, Ken Braren, and Harris Lewine. The name of producer Orrin Keepnews, too, can be found in small print on the

49 Ralph J. Gleason, liner notes to The Cannonball Adderley Quintet in San Francisco, Cannonball Adderley, Riverside RLP 12-311, LP (12in), 1959. Emphasis in original.
50 For more on 52nd Street see: Patrick Burke, Come in and Hear the Truth: Jazz and Race on 52nd Street (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
back left corner, just above the production company, Bill Grauer Productions, Inc. Like
the sounds of Adderley’s quartet, the elements in (and on) the margins are the result of
creative decisions by record company employees and executives. Other creative agents
responsible for the mixing and mastering—Reice Hamel and Jack Matthews—appear
alongside the graphic designers, all listed in a small paragraph that begins and ends with
technical language about the recording technology: “A HIGH FIDELITY Recording . . .
mastered by JACK MATTHEWS (Components Corp.) on a HYDROFEED lathe.”51 In text,
discourses of technology quite literally surround these cultural producers.

The audiovisual elements of the record attempt to bring the club into listeners’
living rooms. They did not appear by chance but as a result of creative acts of historically
situated individuals. Record industry executives, producers, engineers, musicians, and
other technicians had to develop and experiment with a way to make such a sounded
object feel live. A new discourse of temporality and its relation to technology emerged as a
result. Since the live qualities of recorded sounds meant different things to different
companies, this process manifested itself in various ways. Through the 1950s, increased
emphasis on the technological possibilities of on-location recording made liveness into a
valued commodity.

51 A lathe is general term for a tool that rotates an object against a stationary cutting tool. In the
record making process, a specially designed lath was used to cut the grooves of the master disc
during the tape-to-disc transfer. Hydrofeed lathe refers to a then-new technology where hydraulic
pressure controlled the cutting stylus (moving radially), giving the cutting tool even and consistent
pressure. Details about these machines can be found in magazines articles related to high fidelity,
for example: Hubert Luckett, “This Record Checks Out Your Hi-Fi System,” Popular Science,
January 1957, 121–23.
The audiovisual qualities of the 1950s live jazz LPs create a narrative that championed its own existence. The liner notes and other marginalia became the primary vehicle for these records to communicate to a listening audience how to understand this new genre of record making. The records specified the date and location of the original performance while simultaneously emphasizing the “in person” or “on-the-spot” aspect of the recording. Jazz clubs, according to the logic the record presented, brought out something special from the musicians as compared to the studio environment.

Consider Blue Note's first on-location recording, which took place at New York City’s Birdland in February 1954. The session featured the Art Blakey’s quintet with pianist Horace Silver, bassist Curly Russell, saxophonist Lou Donaldson, and trumpeter Clifford Brown and produced enough material for three 10-inch LPs: *A Night at Birdland Vol. 1, Vol. 2*, and *Vol. 3.* Following industry conventions at the time, Blue Note issued the three LPs in sequence and with the same title and cover design, with a slight change of accent color (blue, red, and green, respectively). The same liner notes written by jazz critic Leonard Feather appear on each disc and open with a quotation from Blakey:

“Wow! First time I enjoyed a record session!”

With these significant words, in a comment you will hear on one of these sides, Art Blakey offers an eloquent tribute to the motive that produced this unique series of recordings.

Because this material was by now familiar enough to the musicians, they were able to express themselves fully and freely. While they could avail themselves of the lack of any time limitation on the performances, they still took no undue

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52 The 10-inch format had room for three tracks of music per disc. The discs were issued in 1954 as part of Blue Note’s Modern Jazz BLP 5000 series and were later reissued on two 12-inch LPs.
advantage, never distorted liberty into license; as a result, there are no 20-minute voyages into tautophony. ... Thus A Night at Birdland combines the three elements essential to an enjoyable evening of modern jazz: preparation, improvisation and inspiration.53

Feather goes on to depict the studio space as being characterized by the business of making records, contrasting it against the working conditions of the Birdland stage. Among other things, he mentions the time of jazz club gig (taking place between 11 p.m. and 3 a.m.) as a more natural environment that helped the musicians feel more comfortable and better able to express themselves. Invoking a similar sentiment found on the early LP of Prestige (see chapter 1), Feather ties an idea of free expression to the possibilities afforded by the LP format.54 His use of Blakey’s quote further accentuates the technological possibilities of the format, connecting the liner notes to the sonic medium of the record.

Feather authored most liner notes to Blue Note’s early live recordings. His texts often describe how the vitality of the club environment translated onto record. In the liner notes to Sonny Rollin’s A Night at the Village Vanguard, the first live record at the acclaimed venue, Feather writes: “For the first time the Village Vanguard, one of New York’s most proudly prescient night clubs, comes to life through the medium of an in-person recording.”55 On Jimmy Smith’s Groovin’ at Small’s Paradise, recorded a mere twelve days after Rollin’s set at the Vanguard, Feather also highlights the club...
environment while simultaneously promoting the recording technology. “I was lucky enough to be present the night it was recorded,” he writes. “It seems to me that some of the relaxed friendly atmosphere of the club is transfused into the grooves of this disc.”56 In each of these cases, Feather’s description emphasizes the musical spontaneity and relaxed environment of the club that a studio recording could never duplicate. The jazz club, by this account, appears as the most natural environment for jazz performance—elsewhere he describes the nightclub as the “locus operandi” of jazz.57 Recording technology, in Feather’s account, becomes a crucial intermediary between jazz club and listener, something to be celebrated in how it transforms the “in person” quality of the performance into the grooves of the disc. These records, like so many others, sold a listening experience uninhibited by technology, yet at the same time beholden to it.

Riverside’s first live record featuring Randy Weston at the Cafe Bohemia makes a similar distinction between stage and studio:

As recordings such as this sharply indicate, jazz as heard “live” in actual clubs performance is inevitably more than a little different from the jazz recorded under studio conditions. . . . Most obvious, of course, is that the musicians are playing at and reacting directly to an audience, rather than just acoustically impeccable walls and two or three faces in the studio control room.58

The notes continue to compare the studio to the live recording. Though the studios will continue to produce “a vast amount of lastingly excellent jazz,” the author believes that the jazz club is superior because “there remain certain important qualities of live

57 Leonard Feather, liner notes to The Jazz Messengers at The Cafe Bohemia, Vol. 1, Art Blakey, Blue Note BLP 1507, LP (12in), 1956.
58 Keepnews, liner notes to Jazz à la Bohemia.
performance at its best—warmth, spontaneity, vitality—that are only rarely duplicated in the studio.” The words “warmth” and “spontaneity” have a blended meaning, describing both the social environment of the jazz club and the music created on stage. Given that the sound quality of studio recordings was far superior to those made on location, such descriptions also liken the sometimes messy and certainly-more-noisy live recordings as more revealing and more true to the musicians’ everyday experience. After all, the “faces in the studio control room” are nameless, bodiless technicians and businessmen that should not, by this logic, be mistaken for an audience.

The first live LP on Argo, the jazz subsidiary of Chess Records, similarly contrasts the studio to the spontaneous environment of the jazz club. Recorded in January 1958, But Not for Me: Ahmad Jamal Trio At The Pershing, Volume 1 included notes by radio personality Sid McCoy that emphasized Jamal’s history with the Pershing Lounge:

Miller Brown, the owner of the Pershing Lounge (of Chicago’s Pershing Hotel), and Ahmad Jamal have a rare and wonderful thing going … these two men respect and regard one another very highly. So it is no wonder that Jamal has at the Pershing a suitable atmosphere and climate in which to swing freely. Away from the inhibiting pressure of the recording studio and with the stimulating warmth of a live audience to work before, plus relaxed familiar surroundings, Jamal has been allowed to give you—the listener, full benefit of his amazing skills and marvelous conception in a variety of modes, shades, and tones.59

59 Sid McCoy, liner notes to But Not for Me: Ahmad Jamal Trio at The Pershing, Volume 1, Ahmad Jamal, Argo 628, LP (12in), 1958. But Not For Me became an immediate sensation after its release. By August of 1958, the record had sold nearly 48,000 copies. A 45-rpm single with “But Not for Me” and “Music, Music, Music” sold another 27,000 copies, bolstered by 11,000 unit-sales of a 45-rpm EP made from the LPs material. By December, But Not For Me ranked as a Down Beat best seller and was regularly charting on Billboard’s best selling LPs in the country. Cohodas, Spinning Blues Into Gold, 154–55.
The presence of the audience, here and elsewhere, was portrayed as a valuable asset to these recording in what it brought out in the musicians. Studio records were, by implication, incomplete and partial, despite their superiority in sonic fidelity. Like similar examples above, these notes use the term “warmth” in conjunction with the “live” audience and as a justification for why this record should be considered special when compared to other releases. The atmosphere, along with the relationship between musician and club owner, create the possibilities for uninhibited performance.

Sound, image, and text work together to package and represent the sociality of the jazz club. As the above examples evince, live records justified their existence through liner notes that emphasized the bandstand as an authentic place of music making, especially through comparisons with the recording studio. In such descriptions, the issue of race is never far beneath the surface since the structures of power within the industry did not favor African Americans jazz musicians. Record label owners, producers, critics, engineers, and executives were, generally speaking, white males. The recording studio was space where control over technology meant control over audiovisual forms of representation. In contrast, musicians had authority and control over the bandstand. For producers and record executives, deciding to make records of jazz clubs performances


61 In Noise: The Political Economy of Music Jacques Attali argues that the commodification of music mid-twentieth century was the result of the “colonization of black music by the American industrial apparatus.” He also notes that cultural terrain of “repetitive commodities” shifted at the end of the 1950s, though he gives few particulars. Jacques Attali, Noise: The Political Economy of Music (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 103–4.
meant less technological and musical control over the recording space, especially since manipulative processes in post-production were still limited in the early-to-mid 1950s.\textsuperscript{62} The everyday musical sounds on stage translated onto record in a particular way that was related directly to who was performing on stage, what venue they were recording in, and who was producing the record.

Though producers still had the final say over how those sounds translated onto record, musicians had more control over the sound when recording, both in their musical performance and in the way they interacted with the audience. In a 1956 interview with \textit{Down Beat}, Art Blakey described how he viewed the audience in relation to his performance on stage:

\begin{quote}
When we’re on the stand, and we see that there are people in the audience who aren’t patting their feet and who aren’t nodding their heads to our music, we know we’re doing something wrong. Because when we do get our message across, those head and feet begin to move.\textsuperscript{63}
\end{quote}

In this quote, Blakey outlines his ideal performance environment as one of high audience engagement. His speech metaphor positions the music as a communication tool; he wants his audience to understand and react through bodily movement. Blakey’s comments also reveal his attentiveness towards the audience while on the bandstand, revealing the centrality of social interaction to his mode of music making. Contrast this with Dave Brubeck’s description of his jazz club audiences that appears in the liner notes to his

\textsuperscript{62} Columbia Records, as detailed in chapter 2, was an early adopter of these technologies. Independent jazz labels under consideration here took a much different approach to record making and did not have the financial means to dedicate large amount of studio time to those techniques that were available.

\textsuperscript{63} Qtd. in: Rosenthal, \textit{Hard Bop}, 40. The original quote can be found in 1956 \textit{Down Beat} article titled “Jazz Messengers Blazing a Spirited Trail.”
Brubeck outlines how his group “play[s] differently for different kinds of audiences”:

A concert audience of college students isn’t at all like a night club crowd. The youngsters want more excitement, whereas the night club audience usually consist of older people, which whom you can be more introspective. Just the size of the crowd has a special effect on me and the other fellows in the Quartet; playing for 2,000 or more people is not the same thing as playing for 200. . . . You’ll notice that on JGTC [Jazz Goes to College] the tempos are faster and in general the playing is more explosive and more inclined to be purely emotional. In a night club, we’re a little cooler, and things get more reflective.64

Brubeck characterizes his experience in the clubs as “introspective” and “purely emotional,” relying on Eurocentric tropes of artistic expression that reveals a stark contrast compared to Blakey's comments.65

These different approaches of jazz audiences do not fall on strict black versus white lines. However, they do reveal how different performance spaces intersect with concurrent ideologies of race, music, and technology in the years leading up to *Quintet in San Francisco*. Artists like Blakey and Adderley used their music to connect with audiences through musical decisions about melody, harmony, and rhythm as well as their

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64 Dave Brubeck, liner notes to *Dave Brubeck at Storyville: 1954 (Vol. 1)*, Dave Brubeck, Columbia CL 6330, LP (10in), 1954. This 10-inch LP is one of the earliest live jazz club records and Brubeck’s first record on Columbia. The aural evidence confirms his observation. While the audiences on the *Jazz at Oberlin* LP on Fantasy (1953) can be heard yelling, whistling, and clapping at various points and in the middle of songs, the audiences on the *Brubeck at Storyville* LPs on both Fantasy and Columbia are much more reserved, faintly clapping only at the beginnings and ends of songs. The audience is there, but is only heard quietly in the background.

65 During the mid-1950s, Brubeck was the subject of major criticism from black jazz musicians, many of who described his music as “cold” or “cerebral.” For one example, see Hazel Scott’s comments on Brubeck in: Arthur Taylor, *Notes and Tones: Musician-to-Musician Interviews* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993), 261.
announcements and overall demeanor on stage. Consider Gleason’s comments in the liner notes to *Quintet in San Francisco* about the environment in the Jazz Workshop:

The rhythm of this group is contagious and its overall effect might well cause the lame to walk and the halt to throw away their crutches. At times the atmosphere of the Jazz Workshop resembled a church as much as jazz club. The band quite obviously was having a ball (“I have never worked a job I enjoyed more” was the unanimous verdict of Julian and Nat) and there was no reluctance on their part to show it. When Bobby Timmons’ exciting *This Here* (“it’s part shout and part moan”) would get moving, with Bobby in the midst of one of his full-fingered, rocking solos where he seems almost to be playing a duet with himself, the whole place would start rocking and stomping with the band.  

Gleason evokes biblical stories of Jesus—“the lame to walk and the half to throw away their crutches”—and compares the participatory atmosphere in the Jazz Workshop to that inside of a church. This comparison connected the music to a growing commercial category of jazz associated with black popular culture. It was not a coincidence that Riverside and other jazz labels at the time were targeting black audiences like never before. The aesthetic values here cannot be separated from the economic structures surrounding Adderley’s performance.

*Quintet in San Francisco* reflects these politics in sonic terms as well. Recall how Adderley solidifies the church metaphor in his opening announcement of “This Here”: “It’s simultaneously a shout and a chant, depending upon whether you know anything about the roots of church music and all that kind of stuff—meaning soul church music—I don’t mean, ah, Bach chorales, and so, that’s different.” He continues to talk about the “corruption” of the tune title from “This Here” to “Dis ‘ere” for “purposes of soul,” a

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66 Gleason, liner notes to *The Cannonball Adderley Quintet in San Francisco*.
reference to how his music entwines with black popular culture. However, there remains a disjuncture between aural and visual realms, as the written representations of Timmon’s composition on the record remains the Anglicized as “This Here.” Like the politics of the studio space compared with the bandstand, the hard “T” and “H” that appears on the back of *Quintet in San Francisco* reveal the power of representation and how, though they may work in conversation with one another, the aural and visual have their own ways of making the record feel live.\(^6\) Aural and visual elements have separate but related politics, layered with discourses of race, place, and technology.

**Capturing the Jazz Club, Part II: Representing Sound**

The cut off to “Spontaneous Combustion,” the final track on Side 1 of *Quintet In San Francisco*, ends with an extra punctuation from drummer Lewis Hayes (11:30). Along with the applause and whistles of the audience, someone can be heard saying “all right” and “uh huh” as Adderley begins to address the crowd: “Thank you very much ladies and gentleman.” (As he pauses, another voice emerges: “Now that’s what I’m talkin’ about.”) Adderley tries to continue, “Now we’re gong to—,” but interrupts himself to let the applause die down. After another “thank you,” he introduces the band members and closes out the set: “Now we gotta get another drink, because we have a whole lotta recording to do, so you gotta give us a break. We’ll be back in a minute.” The side ends

\(^6\) Here, my reading of the rupture between sound and text is influenced by Moten’s “phonographic encounters” with Eric Dolphy’s *Last Date* and Marvin Gaye’s *What’s Going On*. Moten, *In the Break*, 78–81, 224–29.
with a quick fade out, not into silence, but to the sounds of the needle against the blank vinyl of the record’s center.

If only for a moment, Adderley’s voice can be heard on every track of *Quintet In San Francisco*, from extended announcements to brief thank yous at the end of some tracks. While the liner notes and other marginalia placed the music in a specific location, Adderley’s voice and the accompanying sounds of the club present a particular kind of music making that foregrounds moments of sociality between musicians and audience members. Nightclubs, taverns, and other small venues that served a black population were, as many have noted, important performance venues for hard bop.\(^{68}\) The sociality contained within such venues made its way onto live records as well.\(^{69}\) Capturing the music in the club, in other words, was about recording moments of social interaction between those on and off the bandstand as people experiencing an event together. The translated into new sounds on record, those of a new musical aesthetic linked at once to black vernacular styles and technological innovations.

The conversational nature of his cadence enabled Adderley to skillfully position his music within a musical trajectory of black culture. He was able to leverage his oration


\(^{69}\) Moments of such interaction on stage date back to one of the first live LPs from a jazz club: Wardell Gray’s *Jazz Concerts*. Recorded at the Hula Hut Club in Los Angeles and likely released in 1952, the 10-inch LP on Prestige included two tracks, “Jazz on Sunset” and “Kiddo,” both also known as the bebop standards “Move” and “Scrapple from the Apple.” The two tracks are similar to Gray’s famous jam-session battle with Dexter Gordon titled *The Chase*, a 78-rpm record recorded in June 1947. A lively audience can be heard throughout the nine-minute recording.
skills to talk politics on the bandstand with a welcoming tone, rather than one of opposition or radicalism.\footnote{Here I’m thinking of Charles Mingus and Max Roach, both of who were well known for their outspoken personalities, on and off stage. In one 1964 interview, Mingus said: “I wish I’d never have to play in a night clubs again. . . . The night-club environment is such that it doesn’t call for a musician to even care whether he’s communicating.” Candid’s 1960 Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus features Mingus announcing each composition and demanding that the audience be silent. However, there is no audience since the LP was not recorded in a nightclub. For a reading of this record in relation to black avant-garde practices at the time, see: Salim Washington, “‘All the Things You Could Be by Now’: Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus and the Limits of Avant-Garde Jazz,” in Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies, ed. Robert G. O’Meally, Brent Hayes Edwards, and Farah Jasmine Griffin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004). For Mingus’s quotation about the nightclub environment, see: “A Jazz Summit Meeting” in Robert Walser, Keeping Time: Readings in Jazz History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 266.}}

In a 1964 group interview with Playboy, Adderley told Nat Hentoff: “Unlike Charles [Mingus], a joint [i.e., nightclub] has my favorite atmosphere. It’s true that some people can get noisy, but that’s part of it. It seems to me that I feel a little better when people seem to be having a good time before you even begin. And it gives me something to play on.”\footnote{“A Jazz Summit Meeting,” 267. Mingus’s quotation in the previous footnote comes from the same group interview.} Here, Adderley says explicitly that he enjoys the interactive nature of the nightclub environment. As Keepnews described Adderley’s onstage persona many years later, the saxophonist did not talk “at” the audience but “to them.”\footnote{Keepnews, The View from Within, 202.} Despite its overall impression of ease and effortlessness, his announcing style was a cultivated skill developed over time as a traveling musician fronting his own band. Biographer Cary Ginell details several press accounts that note Adderley’s memorable onstage presence, especially in addressing the audience.\footnote{Critic Nat Hentoff, for example, described Adderley as “Churchillian” on stage. See: Ginell, Walk Tall, 21–22, 38–39.} As leader, spokesperson, and representative, Adderley embraced the role in a
way that translated so well onto record that Keepnews placed one minute of his spoken introduction at the beginning of _Quintet in San Francisco_. This marked the first time that Adderley’s voice appeared on record.

Adderley presentation style reveals a cultivated awareness in how the live moment interacted with the reproducible one. When Adderley comments that the band had “a whole lotta recording to do,” he reveals the mixed live and mediated nature of his performance. In essence, he was performing for two audiences in October 1959: one at the Jazz Workshop and another listening to the record. The stage and club exist as doubles of themselves, mediated through the expectations of on-location performance and the expectations of on-location recording.\(^74\) The title, liner notes, and marginalia emphasize the club environment, while Adderley emphasizes the recording, at least during that particular moment.

Blue Note’s first live record, _A Night at Birdland_, includes a similar blurred moment between the live and mediated. _A Night at Birdland, Vol. 1_ opens with a minute-long monologue by emcee Pee-Wee Marquette, who introduces the quintet and describes the historic import of the performance turned recording session:

> Ladies and gentleman, as you know we have something special here at Birdland this evening, a recording for Blue Note records. When you applaud for the different passages, your hands go right on the records over there so when they play them over and over all over the country you may be some place and, uh, say well that’s my hand on one of those records that I dug down at Birdland (0:00).

\(^74\) In _The Audible Past_, Jonathan Sterne argues that artists, musicians, and others in the early days of sound reproduction had to learn how to perform for the technology in order to take advantage its possibilities. Jonathan Sterne, _The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction_ (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 225–26, 235. Adderley’s example demonstrates the saxophonist’s virtuosity in this regard, as he balances performing for both an audience and the technology.
Marquette emphasizes the expanded temporality and repeatability of the moment made possible by the technology of recording. By using the phrase “something special,” his introduction informs the audiences both in the club and at home that they are part of the recorded history of Blue Note records. Radio broadcasts from jazz clubs were common during the previous decades and often included announcements from the emcee or host speaking to the radio audience. Marquette’s introduction was both an extension of this practice and signaled a new form of repeatability, where musicians performed for audiences that were at once live and mediated. This form of meta-advertising repeats on *Jutta Hipp at the Hickory House*, where Leonard Feather audibly introduces the performance as a recording session for Blue Note. Kept on disc, such moments serve as aural reminders of how technology mediates the stage during these performances.

Live records from this era required collaboration at the site of production. Musicians, record producers, club owners, and audience members all had different but overlapping levels of investment in the co-creation of these listening spaces. These records brought together two levels of commerce that, up until this point, had only been tangentially related to one another. The first was the club’s physical space, a fixed boundary determined by a particular business at an exact time and specific location. The second was the record’s audience, a collection of listeners not bound to a physical location or clearly defined time but connected through the cultural activity of buying and

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75 One example is *The Complete Live Performances on Savoy*, a 1998 CD set of Charlie Parker’s live recordings from the Royal Roost in 1948 and 1949.
collecting records. The ability to record live and on-location collapsed both domains of commerce into one another.76

As one of the few labels to feature musicians’ voices on their records, Blue Note recognized another potential way to draw listeners into the nightclub space through audio production. Such voices on record had potential to reveal another layer of an instrumentalist’s personality; their speaking voice established a feeling of social proximity because it brought the musician out from behind their instrument. Like *Quintet in San Francisco*, the three volumes of *A Night at Birdland* include Blakey’s voice introducing band members and the repertory from stage. Such announcements were more than informational since the LP’s jacket also contained the same details. They give a sense of the spontaneous conditions at the site of performance and production. For instance, at the end of “Now’s the Time,” Blakey jokes about the youth of his band: “Yes sir, I’m going to stay with the youngsters. When they get too old, I’m gonna get some younger ones—it keeps the mind active”(8:45). During his introduction to “A Night in Tunisia,” Blakey also details the circumstances surrounding Dizzy Gillespie’s composition: “I feel particularly close to this tune because I was right there when [Gillespie] composed it, in Texas, on the bottom of a garbage can. [Faint laughter.] Seriously.” Other examples included trumpeter Kenny Dorham’s introduction to “Yesterdays” on *The Jazz Messengers at the Cafe Bohemia* (1956) and Sonny Rollin’s preface to “Softly as in a Morning Sunrise” on *A Night at the

76 My reading here on the role of commerce and circulation in forming recording cultures is influenced by: Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma, “Cultures of Circulation: The Imaginations of Modernity,” *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002).
Village Vanguard (1958). For many listeners, especially those not located in New York City, these announcements were one of the only times they would have been able to hear the speaking voices of these musicians.

Announcements and other vocalizations from the stage were much more rare on other labels. Debut Records, an independent label owned and operated by Charles and Sue Mingus, issued two 10-inch LPs recorded in September 1953 at the Putnam Central Club in Brooklyn, NY, featuring a jam-session style concert with trombonists J.J. Johnson, Kai Winding, Benny Green, and Willie Dennis. Titled Jazz Workshop: Trombone Rapport Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, the discs included audience applause and other sounds of the club, but not a single musician announcement from stage. Columbia Records took a similar approach on four 10-inch LPs featuring Dave Brubeck issued in 1954: Jazz Goes to College Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, and Dave Brubeck at Storyville: 1954 Vol. 1 and Vol. 2. Though there is a brief announcement by radio host John McLellan at the end of Vol. 2, Brubeck’s voice is never heard. In this way, Columbia followed Fantasy Records who issued six live Brubeck

77 Rollins can be heard saying, “Thank you, thank you. Elvin Jones on drums. [Applause.] Wilber Ware on bass. [Applause.] We’d like to feature Wilber right now on a little thing we hope you’ll all be familiar with: ‘Softly as in a Morning Sunrise.’”

78 Verve Records issued several records with onstage chatter, including two 1958 LPs: Anita O’Day at Mr. Kelley’s and On the Town with the Oscar Peterson Trio. Some brief moments of musicians addressing the audience can also be heard on records with vocalists and mainstream jazz musicians: Armstrong’s Satchmo in Pasadena Auditorium (Decca 1951), Armstrong’s Ambassador Satch (Columbia 1955), Erroll Garner’s Concert by the Sea (Columbia 1956), Ellington at Newport (Columbia 1956), Dave Brubeck at Newport (Columbia 1956), Louis Armstrong at Newport (Columbia 1956), Oscar Peterson at Stratford Shakespearean Festival (Verve 1956), Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday at Newport (Verve 1957), Dizzy Gillespie at Newport (Verve 1957), and Fitzgerald’s At the Opera House (Verve 1958). In general it was rare for voices of instrumentalists to be heard at length. One exception is Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie’s Quintet in Massey Hall (Debut 1953).

79 Like other record labels, Debut later reissued the two volumes of Trombone Rapport on a single 12-inch LP.
records on 10-inch LP and EP beginning in 1953. No stage chatter appears on these records.  

Blue Note’s co-owner Alfred Lion, who also produced most of the label’s live records from this time, purposefully placed the musicians’ voices on record. With the exception of Marquette’s monologue on A Night at Birdland, Lion most often placed announcements at the track’s end as an introduction to the record’s next selection. The accompanying applause usually fades into the intervening silences, which are quickly broken by the music of the following track. In one sense, this organization provided an aural bridge between selections and presented a mostly seamless transition from one song to another. The sequence of the tracks on many of these LPs, however, often does not match the actual performance order. In these instances, the seemingly seamless presentation was sometimes artificial, edited together in post-production. These splices are often audible, for example during Blakey’s introduction to “Night and Tunisia” on A Night at Birdland, Vol. 2. This set of LPs also includes a short musical tag that usually signaled the end of

80 This included The Dave Brubeck Quartet (1953), Jazz at Storyville (1953), Jazz at Oberlin (1953), Jazz at the College of the Pacific (1954), Paul and Dave: Jazz Interwoven (1954), and Jazz at the Blackhawk (1956). Fantasy also issued The Gerry Mulligan Quartet (1953), an LP that featured live recordings on only the A-side.

81 Compare, for example, the tracks as they appear on the three 10-inch LPs of A Night at Birdland to the discographical listing of these same recordings in performance order: Jazz Discography Project, “Blue Note Records Catalog: Modern Jazz 5000 Series (10 Inch Lp)” http://www.jazzdisco.org/blue-note-records/catalog-5000-series/#blp-5037 (accessed 1 January 2015). The CD reissues often re-sequence the recordings in concert order. One example is the CD reissue of Ellington at Newport, the LP discussed in chapter 2.

82 Splices can also be heard on Evans’s Sunday at the Village Vanguard and Waltz for Debby, issued by Riverside in 1961. Though they can clearly be heard on remastered versions of these records (issued in 1990s and 2000s), such spliced are much more difficult to identify on the original LPs played on modern-day equipment. Splices were rarely (if ever) written about in trade publications.
the set. At the end of “Mayreh” (5:50), Blakey’s ensemble plays a quick version of George Shearing’s “Lullaby of Birdland,” the club’s official theme song. Unlike the club, however, the record slowly fades out—a cymbal crash dissipating through an engineer’s turn of a knob.

In Hard Bop: Jazz and Black Music, 1955–1965, David Rosenthal suggests a four-tier taxonomy of hard bop. Artists like Blakey, Adderley, and Jimmy Smith fall into in a category closely aligned with black popular culture and who played music influenced by urban blues, gospel, and R&B. This category of musicians produced more live records than any other sub-genre of jazz during this time. The first sounds on many of these records were a few seconds of club ambience: the murmur of voices, the clinking of dishes, the musicians warming up, or other interactions among band and audience members. These sounds were not of a crowd en masse, but of individuals reacting to or creating the music. During Clifford Brown’s trumpet cadenza on “A Night in Tunisia” on A Night a Birdland, someone (perhaps Blakey) shouts, “Blow your horn!” (8:55). As the tapes continue to run after the band concludes “Where or When,” the closing track on the A side of The Incredible Jimmy Smith at Club Baby Grand, Vol. 1, someone calls to Smith: “Hey Jimmy!” Soon after, someone else: “He went all the way out that time!” Then: “That

during the mid-1950s. Listener expectation regarding such mediation is a subject that deserves further research, but my sense is that splices and other forms of audio production received greater attention in the 1960s with the advent of stereo playback and regular use of multi-track recording. Shearing composed the tune in 1952 for a series of live radio broadcasts from the club. George Shearing, Lullaby of Birdland, ed. Alyn Shipton (New York: Continuum, 2004), 137–48. Rosenthal, Hard Bop, 44. Several audience members also audibly react to Clifford Brown’s trumpet solo on “Quicksilver” (2:43–2:50). The club environment is particularly audible throughout “Let’s Cool One” and “In Walked Bud” on Monk’s 1957 LP, Misterioso.
cat is something else, ain’t he” (9:05). By the time of this 1956 Blue Note record, Smith was exclusively performing on the Hammond B-3 organ, an instrument with roots in the black church. Smith popularized the B-3 organ in jazz, though the instrument was already a mainstay in public gathering places within the black community. As live recordings of these artists began circulating in the mid-1950s, capturing the ambiance of the club became a primary concern because it translated such community spaces onto disc along with the music.

Riverside’s four live records that predate Quintet In San Francisco, recorded 1956–1958, include sounds of the club environment, though they do not include onstage announcements from the musicians. Monk’s Thelonious in Action and Weston’s Jazz à la Bohemia, similar to some Blue Note LPs from this period, contain brief theme songs marking the end of the set. These tracks usually lasted around one minute apiece. The other records include moments of audience applause and the occasional snapped count-off to begin a performance. The applause at the track’s end usually fades out quickly, an effect done in the studio after the fact. Thus, these records were similar to others from the period in how they captured aspects of the club environment, yet they were also quite different from Riverside’s approach to recording and packaging Adderley’s 1959 performance at the Jazz Workshop.

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87 The four jazz club records are: Weston’s Jazz à la Bohemia, Adams’s 10 to 4 at the 5 Spot, as well as Monk’s Misterioso and Thelonious in Action. In 1959, Riverside also issued Thelonious Monk Orchestra at Town Hall, recorded a large concert hall in New York City. This LP also does not include onstage announcements.
The presence of Adderley’s voice brought something different to listeners. Though informational at times, these onstage announcements infused a social aurality on record that, like Adderley’s music overall, connected with and reflected a black popular audience. Where Adderley’s address to the audience was the product of his skills in oration, its presence on *Quintet in San Francisco* resulted from years of experimentation with recording on-location in jazz clubs. The conditions of possibility were made while independent jazz record companies found ways of placing musicians’ voices and the interactive sounds of the club onto record. Record production was key in crafting Adderley’s socio-aurality on record.

In an era where the majority of jazz continued moving away from popular music, musicians like Adderley continued to produce music for black communities. Adderley’s music, which became known as “soul” jazz, maintained is connections to the black working class as it developed in parallel to the emergent styles of 1960s black popular music. Such development was not without controversy. Many writers and cultural critics—everyone from traditionalist Martin Williams to the radical leaning Amiri Baraka—criticized soul jazz for aligning itself with mass consumerism. As would become clear in the year following *Quintet in San Francisco*, Adderley was keenly aware of his audience and how his music had the potential to celebrate black music and its history.

The spontaneous moments of audience and musician interaction featured on Adderley’s

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89 Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 98.
90 Mark Anthony Neal describes Adderley’s music as understanding “music’s historical role in the everyday lives of everyday black folks and, as such, fashioned a jazz style that was both warmly received and culturally useful for the black community.” Neal, *What the Music Said*, 32.
live records combined musical poetics with forms of mass distribution and consumption. Adderley’s mindfulness of the recording process during such moments as the one that began this section—“we have a whole lotta recording to do”—is a sonic reminder of the role technology played in the development of this new Afro-modernity.

**Reprise: Quintet in San Francisco**

Perhaps more than any other instrumentalist during this period of jazz history, Adderley became associated with the live recording. He went on to record five live LPs on Riverside and another eight for Capitol Records, accounting for roughly half of Adderley’s discography between 1959 and 1969. The first, *Quintet in San Francisco*, catapulted him into the national music scene and extended his reputation beyond those jazz listeners who knew him as former sideman with Miles Davis. Adderley’s monologues became a defining characteristic of his legacy and, for many listeners, made his voice as recognizable as his saxophone playing. The history of how his voice came to appear on these records is at once musical, technological, and cultural as the jazz industry developed the live jazz LP to package the innovative sounds being created by hard bop musicians during the 1950s. Just as Miles Davis’s voice appeared on record in the early days of the LP format, the live voices of jazz musicians constituted new territory of the jazz LP. Davis’s studio voice explored

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the possibilities afforded by the new format; the live jazz voice pushed jazz outward beyond the studio, creating a socio-aurality of black community spaces on record.

Adderley was no bystander to this process. Embracing the live record also meant the opportunity for him to address the audience in his own words, thereby taking advantage of the blurred technological boundary between live and recorded as well as the blurred artistic boundary between musical and commercial production. He positioned himself to take advantage of the commercial possibilities of his music, working cooperatively within the structures of the music business. For most of 1961, for example, Adderley wrote a regular column about jazz and the music business that appeared in the New York Amsterdam News. Adderley began producing records for Riverside around this time as well. He also started a record production company called Junat Production with his brother Nat. Along with controlling the rights to his recordings at Riverside after 1961, the Adderley brothers envisioned Junat to be involved with concert promotion and television pilots. Adderley’s understanding of technological structures of the music business spoke to an awareness of his own subject positioning as a black cultural producer with an increasingly mediatized world, a practice that Weheliye would describe as a form of sonic Afro-modernity. Adderley’s musical skill and business acumen put him in a position to take advantage of the commercial momentum of *Quintet in San Francisco*.

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93 Ginell, *Walk Tall*, 77, 81.
On stage and on record, Adderley is simultaneously causal and serious. His eloquently spoken introduction and rhetorical delivery encourage participation, offering entry to his music for listeners of all kinds. At the same time, he revealed with clarity the racial pride inherent in his music, foreshadowing the growing sentiment that would define soul, funk, and other forms of black popular music in the 1960s. Adderley’s emphasis on the words “soul” and “church” during his opening monologue to *Quintet in San Francisco* denotes an unmistakably black musical aesthetic with roots in the black vernacular though not reducible to it. Musicians like Adderley merged this with the modernist improvisational styles of bebop, resulting in what Monson has described as a “blackening of modernist aesthetics” of 1950s jazz. The presence of his voice on record, meanwhile, testifies to how the blackening translated onto commercial jazz recordings through Adderley’s creative and critical music making.

Adderley’s announcements, the sounds of audiences, the musical interactions, and the mistakes at the mixing board can be best understood by flipping the analytic lens to focus beyond label history and stylistic development. Placed within a broader history of audio production, visual record design, and cooperative artistic labor, Adderley’s carefully curated live LP reveals how jazz records become recorded, produced, designed, pressed, and distributed. Attending to such details places the music in conversation with the sociality in the jazz clubs and the market demands of the late-1950s jazz consumer. After all, this is *soul*, you know what I mean? All right.

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Chapter 4 Discography: Jazz Recorded “Live” at the Club


“Man! I'm gonna tell you something that will blow your mind.” In typical fashion, Brian Miller pauses for a moment and the silence punctuates his delivery. “I'm even gonna stop the music,” he said, quickly flipping off my car stereo. I gave him a quick look of affirmation. “That Newport record—Ellington 1956 . . .” He pauses after each phrase, letting his words linger in cabin of my compact car. “Ryan Hanseler. In 2012. At a gig this past weekend—he heard that record for the first time.” Clearly he assumes I know exactly which record he means and I respond as expected: Never? You mean he had never heard it before? Brian continued: “I KNOW, right? That’s what I’m saying. Seeing him listen to it on a break during this gig was like experiencing it again for the first time. You remember what that was like? Crazy.”

Brian Miller is a saxophonist and one of the better ones in the area, so *Ellington at Newport* has particular resonance. He did not specify, but it was clear that “that Newport record” really meant Gonsalves’s solo. Brian and I often drove to gigs together and records were always the topic of conversation, though we had never talked about *Ellington at
Newport before. We rarely, if ever, discussed my research—we were simply doing what jazz musicians do: listening and talking about the music.

That night we were en route to a gig at the North Carolina Museum of Art, a fitting scene considering Ellington’s high art aesthetic and aspirations. During the gig, records of the 1950s continued to be present. At one point, maybe in the second set, we played Count Basie’s arrangement of “April in Paris,” recorded in July of 1955 and eventually issued on a 1957 LP by the same name. Some text at the top of our chart read: “Transcribed as recorded by the Count Basie big band.”

In both scenarios, this history of jazz on record persists. Though the technology has changed drastically since these records first circulated, the music still remains part of the social fabric of the contemporary jazz scene. Records act as touchstones, reference points that shape social interactions on and off the bandstand.1 They have potential to evoke nostalgia for moments of listening where the past cuts through the present in multilayered ways. How did we get here? What social and technological networks had to be in place so that a few musicians could (and would want to) crowd around an iPhone listening to a particular tenor saxophone solo from 1956? How is it that Brian could anticipate my reaction? Of course, there is no complete answer, but I believe the LP and the creative practices that facilitated the technology’s adoption have something to do with it.

1 For several examples of jazz musicians interacting socially around records see: Paul Berliner, Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 96, 108, 70. For more on records influencing contemporary performance, see: Gabriel Solis, Monk’s Music: Thelonious Monk and Jazz History in the Making (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).
After four hours of tracking, the band breaks for a meal. The food is typical southern fare: baked beans, ham hock, collards, and cornbread. For most of the recording session I had been on the control room couch, listening to the ensemble work through the difficult arrangements and watching the recording engineers do their best to move the session along. Now, I join the band, eagerly anticipating the hot, homemade meal. Though they are behind schedule, the musicians are nevertheless in a festive mood.

As we eat, I talk with Vincent Gardner, lead trombonist with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, and one of the local saxophonists, Bluford Thompson (everyone calls him “Blu”). Vince had recently read a 1964 group interview in *Playboy* with some of the foremost musicians and critics of the time, including Cannonball Adderley, Dizzy Gillespie, Dave Brubeck, and Charles Mingus.² Our conversation centers on jazz making against the backdrop of the civil rights movement, in particular the different approaches that Cannonball, Mingus, and a few others took towards the movement. “It’s not like Cannonball didn’t display his politics,” I say in response to a comment about Mingus’s

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more militant feelings. “What about a record like *Country Preacher* with that introduction with [Reverend] Jessie Jackson?” Vincent nods his head in response, and then remarks on what he felt were Cannonball’s sharp comments in the article about issues of race and culture. Suddenly, Blu breaks in to quote Adderley’s prelude on *The Cannonball Adderley Quintet In San Francisco*: “I don’t mean no Bach Chorales . . .” The quotation has its intended effect, a joke with a serious edge. We all laugh, recognizing how Blu’s perfectly timed invocation mimics Adderley’s humorous, yet weighty engagement with the racial politics of jazz making.

Though recorded a decade apart, *Country Preacher* and *Quintet In San Francisco* are in conversation with one another in the way they leverage the expressive power of jazz toward a political end. This fact is not lost on these musicians, who are all eager to talk about the music’s social import. At these moments, recorded sounds are not simply reified moments of the past but sonic reminders for the present that disclose the co-constitutional interaction of sound, politics, and technology. Blu’s remark illustrates how the sound of Adderley’s voice, the meaning of his words, and his 1959 LP were the product of one era but continue their repetition in another.

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3 I discuss the political underpinnings of this quote in chapter 4. The full quote proceeds the quintet’s rendition of Bobby Timmons’s “This Here,” which opens the album: “It’s simultaneously a shout and a chant, depending upon whether you know anything about the roots of church music and all that kind of stuff—meaning soul church music—I don’t mean, ah, Bach chorales, and so, that’s different.”
Throughout its history, jazz has been straight ahead and freely non-referential, improvised and through composed, cerebral and intensely emotional, usually at the same time. Its practitioners can (and do) make reference to musicals, pop music, country, world music, hip-hop, and Western art traditions. Today, jazz can be heard in commercials, movies, elevators, parking decks, concert halls, university classrooms, and on TV shows or radio broadcasts. It finds a comfortable home in prominent cultural organization like Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, and the Smithsonian. Outside the mainstream, the music also exists in niche scenes with a devoted listenership. Artists continue to make music in small concert venues, out-of-the-way nightclubs, and small urban cultural centers that struggle to stay open. As a genre, jazz has always escaped precise definition, yet somehow remained an imagined musical community for more than a century.

I began my concluding thoughts with the above anecdotes to emphasize the lasting influence that moments on record have on jazz cultures. Though I chose these particular stories because they invoke two records featured in this study, they are representative of many other interactions I have had with a wide variety of jazz listeners. Such moments of shared listening point to how these records (and others) continue to define social interactions in numerous ways. They also underscore one of the main themes of this dissertation: jazz, as an artistic and cultural practice, exists in circulation.

The particular history of the long-playing record that this study tells, I have come to believe, does much to explain contemporary thinking about jazz records. The period of musical and media transition during the first decade of the LP unveils the messy entanglements, the imbroglio, of record making before the naturalization of the jazz
album. As told through their LPs, the stories of Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, and Cannonball Adderley disclose how these mediated objects materialized out of disagreements, contestations, and experiments around what a jazz record was then or could be in the future. Understood within this context, these histories are ones of circulation and offer a way to understand how this musical scene grew and retained its audience. With the LP, records became more than a two-track snapshot sold in a brown paper sleeve—they became a collection of music bound together as an album. LPs became a technology of remembrance.

Recent ethnographic scholarship has increasingly turned its attention towards circulation on the fringes of commercial networks, or what ethnomusicologist David Novak describes as the rough “edge” of circulation. As Novak argues throughout his study on noise music in Japan, the liminal spaces at the edge define boundaries, but also represent locations of potential change and transformation.4 For historians, such an understanding of circulation at the edge has potential to re-conceptualize modes of traditional commerce that assume a clearly delineated path from producer to consumer. As the history of jazz making in the 1950s attests, smooth centers of circulation did not simply appear but had to be negotiated, defined, and transformed. George Avakian got his start in the record business by reissuing—that is, helping Columbia re-circulate—

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significant jazz records from the twenties and thirties. What is now considered some of the most iconic music in the entire genre, for instance Armstrong’s iconic hot five and hot seven sessions, was simply unavailable before then. Orrin Keepnews of Riverside once described his distribution network in the early days of the label: a beat-up station wagon in which he hand delivered records to various New York City stores. Bob Weinstock, founder of Prestige Records, traveled the country by bus to promote his product to radio disc jockeys and jukebox distributors. Rudy Van Gelder, the most acclaimed engineer from this era, recorded in the living room of his parents’ house in Hackensack, New Jersey for nearly the entire decade. In the late-1940s and early-1950s, the circulation of jazz was rough even within the edges.

Circulation is, much like media, plural, multilayered, and contingent on people with overlapping and often conflicting interests. In their essay, “Cultures of Circulation: The Imaginations of Modernity,” Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma understand circulation not as a manner of transmitting culture, but as something that actually constitutes it. The circulation of media, they write, presumes and necessitates a community invested in its contents. Though such investment is irreducible to singularities, these “interpretive

\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{5} For more on the significance of these records, see: Brian Harker, } \textit{Louis Armstrong’s Hot Five and Hot Seven Recordings} \text{ (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{6} Orrin Keepnews, liner notes to } \textit{The Riverside Records story}, \textit{Riverside} 4RCD 4422-2, CD, 1997.}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{7} For one version of this story, see: Ben Ratliff, “Bob Weinstock, 77, Founder of the Jazz Label Prestige,” } \textit{New York Times}, 16 January 2006, B7.}\]
communities” rely on circulation to construct meaning, understanding, and the terms of evaluation. Circulation is, as Novak sums up, a “culture-making process.”

Defining jazz as a culture of circulation acknowledges the essential though tangled relationship between music making and its reproductions. The multifaceted listenership of jazz depends on circulation just as the music’s circulation depends on its listenership. That is, jazz is a practice of circulation or, as Jean-Luc Nancy succinctly puts it, jazz is music “made to listen to itself.” Still, the passive structure of Nancy’s sentence cuts to the core of this study—if jazz was made to listen to itself, who and what did the making and how did this happen? The circulation of the jazz album has made it into an exemplary product of twentieth-century modernity: it is surrounded by commerce and commercial structures yet often disavows them; it is simultaneously beholden to mediated objects and reifies the live performance; and serves both as a location of resistance and a prime example of how white-European culture perpetuates the uneven power dynamics that continue to plague African Americans and other disadvantaged populations.

The LP format is more than a container for sound. LPs are cultural objects that helped construct the discourses surrounding jazz in the 1950s. Within this discursive structure, what I have come to think of as the cultural feedback loop of mediated objects,

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9 Novak, Japanoise, 18.
issues of labor and capital cannot be disregarded. Thinking through circulation throws the interactions between black cultural producers and the structures of power within the jazz industry into sharp relief—race functions as vital category of record making that shapes music making and visa versa.

In parallel with the LP’s adoption, many musicians made the effort to foreground the uniquely black politics and poetics of jazz while simultaneously seeking greater control over their music’s production and distribution. The featured artists of this study, Adderley, Gillespie, Ellington, and Davis, accomplished this in different, though related ways. Davis took issue with the Miles Ahead cover, openly questioning Avakian’s design decisions thereby challenging Columbia’s tendency to set the music within a logic of respectability that deemphasized jazz’s African American roots. Ellington increasingly gained power within the industry and still willingly participated in the correction of musical mistakes through studio production. Gillespie expertly utilized his charisma onstage tell the story of jazz as one of black music while also leveraging his official position granted by the State Department to enter into national conversations about civil rights. Adderley worked within the structures of the industry to keep control over his intellectual property and subtly exert command over his artistic labor. These narratives emerge from approaching the LP as the result of cooperative cultural creation and circulation.

Here I follow Lee and LiPuma who argue that circulation enables new modes of analysis precisely because “issues of capital cannot be bracketed.” Lee and LiPuma, “Cultures of Circulation,” 211. For more on feedback as an analytic for understanding culture, particularly as it relates to the circulation of music via reproduction, see: Novak, Japanoise, 17.
To date, jazz literature has skillfully investigated the many different stylistic developments of the 1950s and their underlying cultural politics. The dominant narrative about this period highlights musical innovations, struggles against the violent structures of racism, and the side-by-side (though often contentious) existence of bebop, traditional jazz, swing, cool jazz, hard bop, and soul jazz. The international profile of jazz’s greatest stars and the emergence of the next generation continue to define the history of this era. As jazz cut across various levels of US culture, it did so through the circulation of records. LPs are ever-present in jazz literature as objects of reference, resistance, and recollection, rather than, as I maintain, technology that shaped musical styles and cultural boundaries. Both large and independent record companies responded to the new technological possibilities of the LP in their own ways, seeking the most effective ways to record, package, and market their product. Musicians actively participated in this transition, albeit with different levels of investment and control. Using records as a critical apparatus for understanding the political import of this music empowered this study to attend to the ways that circulation shapes musical innovation.

In telling jazz history as one of circulation, I have relied on materials and methods familiar to jazz scholars. I combed through newspaper and magazine articles, continually returned to discographies, scrutinized liner notes, conducted informational interviews, and pored over recorded sounds. In the archives I dug through record crates, document folders, photo collections, and record label ephemera. I have also relied on well-known histories and cited oft-repeated mythologies about musicians, producers, and record labels. By asking questions about circulation as it relates to technological mediation,
however, my analysis had shifted the focus away from records as objects of historical
documentation and instead towards an understanding of records as objects of cooperative,
creative, and artistic labor.

Be it on stage, in the studio, behind the control board, or in the accompanying liner
notes, jazz cultural producers activated different notions of liveness. As the sounds of
audience applause, onstage announcements, studio chatter, or mistakes began to appear
on LP, liveness came to have a value determined by the affordances of the LP format and
in ways tied directly to the personalities of specific musicians and record makers.
Analyzing liveness through particular biographies and genealogies reveals how the
network of social practices within the industry constructed and defined the boundaries of
jazz during the 1950s.

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Recently, 1959 has become a touchstone year for some jazz historians, who portray it
as a breakout and transformative moment. The evidence, usually given in the form of
iconic records, is compelling. Paul Bernays’s 2009 BBC documentary, 1959: The Year That
Changed Jazz, focuses on four 12-inch LPs issued that year: Miles Davis’s Kind of Blue, Dave
Brubeck’s Time Out, Ornette Coleman’s The Shape Of Jazz to Come, and Charles Mingus’s
Mingus Ah Um. In his thoughtful essay, “1959: The Beginning of Beyond,” Darius Brubeck adds John Coltrane’s *Giant Steps* and the release of the *Spirituals to Swing* Carnegie Hall concert to that list. (Of course, nowhere does Brubeck mention that the 1959 *Spirituals to Swing* LP includes announcements recorded in a studio and inserted into the original recordings during post-production to simulate a “live” emcee.) Brubeck continues his description:

The collective breakthrough in 1959 was the decisive emancipation of jazz from its popular past; a break not only from being seen as popular entertainment and dance music, but from being defined by the very (musical) characteristics that lasted even through the so-called bebop revolution. Modern jazz was not a rejection of tradition but, like modern “classical” music, was built on reconceptualizing what was already possible.

This passage represents a shared sentiment among many historians that 1959 was a musical tipping point. Coleman’s collective improvisation and Davis’s modal conception opened new avenues of harmonic and rhythm exploration, especially in the form of extended soloing. Dave Brubeck’s odd meters expanded the possibilities of rhythmic complexity in relation to form and demonstrated how the integration of world musics

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13 Though recorded in 1959, Atlantic issued *Giant Steps* in 1960. The 1938 *Spirituals to Swing* concert was among the first times that Carnegie Hall featured African Americans as the main act. The historically themed concert featured Count Basie, Bessie Smith, Lester Young, Sidney Bechet, “Big” Joe Turner, among others. For a reprint of the concert’s original program, see: James Dugan and John Hammond, “An Early Black-Music Concert from Spirituals to Swing,” *The Black Perspective in Music* 2, no. 2 (1974).

with jazz styles could lead to commercial success.\textsuperscript{15} Mingus’s wonderfully eclectic large-ensemble style and Coltrane’s dense harmonic structure similarly looked forward to musical experiments of the 1960s and beyond. There can be little doubt that this collection of albums proves 1959 to be a landmark year.\textsuperscript{16}

This dissertation also ends in 1959, though not necessarily for the reasons cited by Bernays and Brubeck above. I see 1959 not as the breakout moment, but as the culmination of a decade of transition and experimentation, a pivot point that resulted from the blossoming of the jazz album. By that year, format conventions of the industry were well established and would remain so for several decades. Live jazz records, helped by Cannonball Adderley’s surprise hit and Ellington’s widely-heard triumph at Newport, were no longer an experiment but a viable and expected commercial genre. Jazz musicians would continue to use their music to struggle against oppression and forms of institutional racism, notably by further pushing the boundaries of long-form improvisations and radical forms of expression. The genre as a whole also remained a regular part of the State Department’s Cold War efforts abroad while the Newport Jazz Festival became an institution. That year, Van Gelder also moved his recording studio from his parents’ home into a brand new, custom built facility that would continue to define the sound of jazz for years to come.

\textsuperscript{15} Time Out rose to number two on the Billboard pop album charts.
\textsuperscript{16} This year also marked the passing of several notable musicians of the previous generation, including Billie Holiday, Lester Young, and Sidney Bechet.
Vinyl was no longer at the vanguard but solidly in the center. Brubeck’s *Time Out* and Mingus’s *Mingus Ah Um* both featured the abstract, expressionist artwork of graphic designer S. Neil Fujita.\(^{17}\) Extended liner notes, including those written by musicians, were a regular feature on LP. *Kind of Blue*, for example, included notes by pianist Bill Evans. Increased attention was also being given to sound quality and emergent forms of signal processing. Stereophonic discs gained widespread adoption in 1959 as well, along with the normalized use of multi-track recording. *Mingus Ah Um* included several minutes of music spliced, cut, and inserted by producer Teo Macero, who would eventually extend such techniques to their limit in the late-1960s with Davis’s *A Tribute to Jack Johnson* and *Bitches Brew.*\(^{18}\) In 1959, the 12-inch LP had hit its stride, helped by other sonic technologies that had, throughout the decade, codified the jazz album.

The story of long-playing microgroove technology is one not only about music, but also about technological adaptation. It is not only a history of experimentation with technology, but also one of cultural positioning and social engagement by means of and through technology. This story is not only about control over forms of reproduction, but about musicians and their moments of performance captured on record. This is a cultural history that necessitates understanding *record making* as a vital process that shapes music and its circulation.

\(^{17}\) Initially Brubeck wanted to use the artwork of Joan Miró but could not get the rights to the painter’s artwork. The quartet’s follow up album, *Time Further Out* (1961), used Miró’s *Painting: 1925*. Ornette Colman’s *Free Jazz*, an LP also from 1961, featured Jackson Pollock’s *The White Light*. For discussion of these albums and their artwork, see: Stuart Nicholson, *Jazz and Culture in a Global Age* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2014), 243–44.

\(^{18}\) Macero also produced *Kind of Blue*, *Mingus Ah Um*, and *Time Out*. Of the other LPs mentioned above, *The Shape Of Jazz to Come* and *Giant Steps* share Nesuhi Ertegun as the producer.
In the early part of August 2012, I took a trip to the Jazz Record Center, a renowned Manhattan store that specializes in rare and used vinyl. I had been there several times before, but at this moment, surrounded by thousands of used LPs, I was struck by the lasting power of this medium. As I flipped through the bins, I saw the familiar faces of Erroll Garner, Benny Goodman, Brubeck, Cannonball, Miles, Satchmo, Duke, and Bird. My time spent looking at, listening to, and living with so many LPs in the archives that summer made me appreciate what such spaces like this one still meant for jazz as a culture of circulation.

I wasn’t on the hunt that day, so my browsing remained haphazard and a bit random. Eventually, I found myself looking through the “New Releases,” a section near the front of the store in a short series of white bins. The section mostly contained newly reissued 12-inch LPs, a symptom of the vinyl resurgence that had been happening for the past several years. My eyes were drawn to a new pressing of Johnny Griffin’s *A Blowing Session*, a favorite record of mine originally issued by Blue Note in 1957. This LP reissue replicated the original in nearly every detail—the deep green and black colors on the cover, the picture of Griffin surrounded by a flock of birds, the fonts and layout on the
back, the “high fidelity” marking in the top right-hand corner, and the liner notes by Ira Gitler.

When I picked up the record, I immediately noted its weight and thickness. What was a single 12-inch LP in 1957 had, in 2012, become a double-LP in a high-gloss gatefold package. I curiously turned the record over several times, looking for any information about the single-turned-double LP. Finally, I found a clue in the copyright line at the bottom of the back jacket, written in the smallest font imaginable: “Distributed by Music Matters Ltd.” I came to learn that Music Matters specializes in high-priced Blue Note reissues targeted towards audiophiles and collectors. According to their website, Griffin’s record is part of their “Blue Note: The Definitive Vinyl Reissue Series.” The tag line is “you listen, you look, you’re there. . .”

When I took one of records out of its sleeve, I was further surprised to find that these were not the 33 1/3-rpm records of old, but unusual 12-inch LPs spinning at 45-rpm. Apparently the company chose 45-rpm to preserve fidelity from their mastering processes. Though the LP displayed the same 1950s terminology—“long playing,” “microgroove,” “high fidelity”—four tracks of music placed on four different 12-inch LP sides was a phenomenon of the twenty-first century. The existence of this record depended on listeners willing to pay fifty dollars or more for a single album. It depended on record companies having the equipment and technicians able to make such a product for a niche

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9 Ellipsis in original. As of February 2015, Music Matters was still actively reissuing classic Blue Note records, quickly approaching 150 records in their catalog. Their website is:
http://www.musicmattersjazz.com/.
market of listeners. It depended on record players that have different speed settings as well as the appropriate tone arm length and stylus to enable both 45- and 33-rpm playback. In jazz cultures of circulation, the particulars of format continue to matter.

Conclusion Discography


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Liner Notes


**Complete Discography**


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Biography

Darren Mueller was born on March 30, 1983 in Boulder, Colorado. He graduated with highest honors from the University of Colorado at Boulder in December 2005, earning a Bachelor of Music in Saxophone Performance with a secondary area of specialty in Jazz Studies. In 2008, he earned a Master of Arts in Jazz History and Research from Rutgers University, Newark Campus, where he also received The Milt Gabler Award for Graduate Jazz Scholarship. His doctoral work at Duke University has generously been supported by the Ottis Green Fellowship for PhD Students in Humanities and Social Sciences, the Aleane Webb Dissertation Research Fellowship, and two summer research fellowships, all from The Graduate School at Duke University. While at Duke, Darren also received a Graduate School Administrative Fellowship and a Bass Instructional Fellowship with the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT). Further research support has come from the Institute of Jazz Studies through a 2014 Berger-Carter Jazz Research Award. His article, “Quest for the Moment: The Audio Production of Ellington at Newport,” appeared in the Winter 2014 issue of Jazz Perspectives.