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Creative Agency, Musical Autonomy, and Post-Raciality in Temple University's Jazz
Studies Program

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Music

by

Matthew Sean Neil

June 2014

Thesis Committee:

Dr. Jonathan Ritter, Chairperson

Dr. René T.A. Lysloff

Dr. Deborah Wong

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The Thesis of Matthew Sean Neil is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Creative Agency, Musical Autonomy, and Post-Raciality in Temple University's Jazz Studies Program

by

Matthew Sean Neil

Master of Arts, Graduate Program in Music
University of California, Riverside, June 2014
Dr. Jonathan Ritter, Chairperson

In the last 30 years, university conservatory programs have become central sites of jazz activity. As jazz continues to move into the university, its future will be increasingly determined by the institutions of higher education that shape the music's knowledge production, supply of musicians, and creative aesthetics. This thesis fills a need for additional scholarship on these university jazz conservatory programs as important sites of music making, while paying particular attention to the implications of university institutionalization on jazz. Through interviews of alumni of Temple University's jazz studies programs, I explore how students navigate issues of creative agency in the face of a uniform pedagogy promoted by the university; economic hardships for jazz which the university helps perpetuate; the symbiotic relationship between the university and its encompassing local community; and the value of a perceived "tradition" as promoted by university jazz studies programs. Though this

“tradition” stems from African American cultural practices, particularly the post-bebop era of the 1940s to 1960s, I argue that university jazz programs such as Temple, following the lead of Jazz at Lincoln Center, present this jazz tradition as deracinated and stripped of its social context. As jazz continues to move into the realm of high art, its once culturally defined musical attributes become purely aesthetic material suitable for consumption and production as autonomous art in the conservatory. As a result, jazz becomes increasingly regarded in terms suiting a contemporary ideology of post-raciality, which in the name of greater inclusion risks losing the music’s cultural particularity. The institutionalizing of jazz thus can act as a viewing lens into twenty-first century American society and prevailing ideologies of multiculturalism.

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Introduction

In the fall of 2013, I attended a concert at Saddleback College in Mission Viejo, California featuring a jazz trio lead by Ben Schachter, one of my former instructors at Temple University, where I graduated with a jazz composition degree in 2011. I caught up with Schachter after the performance and told him about my then in-progress thesis project on jazz university education programs. I explained the project in a nutshell, mentioning how I sought to examine the university's effect "on the scene." Schachter quickly replied: "It *is* the scene."

Schachter's comment rung a simple yet poignant truth: the university defined everything about the performance that night. The concert was hosted by the burgeoning jazz studies program at Saddleback College, largely attended by the student body of aspiring musicians there; Schachter and his Re:Trio group consisted of two former students he had mentored in the jazz studies program at Temple; and my own relationship with Schachter, as well as my strong interest in jazz that led me to the event, resulted from my time at Temple. The circumstances of that night were in fact not unusual, but indicative of the influential role university jazz conservatory programs now occupy in contemporary American jazz performance scenes.

Despite this central role of university jazz studies programs in contemporary jazz, scholarship on these programs has generally been lacking in examining the larger implications of jazz's entrance into the conservatory. David Ake's article "Crossing the Street: Rethinking Jazz Education" draws attention to the centrality of jazz education by effectively listing every known contemporary musician and the university programs

where they studied (Ake 2012), but additional critical study of the outcomes of university jazz education is still sorely needed, especially if it is indeed “*the scene.*” Using Temple University’s jazz studies program as a case study, I seek to examine this activity more critically, particularly while addressing concerns that the university institutionalization of jazz would lead to a homogenization, creative stifling, and deracination of the music. As I contend that the university institutionalization of jazz largely follows the model of the Western classical conservatory, I draw from existing research on these sorts of music institutions and their role in shaping musical traditions and their artistic ideologies. I also explore the symbiotic relationship between Temple’s jazz studies program and its surrounding Philadelphia scene, the role of faculty in influencing the musical identity of both the program and its students, and the current economic climate of the contemporary jazz scene as defined by the university. Finally, I argue that jazz university programs such as Temple further move jazz towards a more fully autonomous art music realm, resulting in both increased creative agency on the part of the individual musician and an accompanying decontextualization of jazz music from its relevant social and cultural history. In particular, the current status of jazz in the university conservatory reflects a particular 21st-century ideology of post-raciality that threatens to abandon jazz’s African American historical past in favor of a more inclusionary future.

Over the last three to four decades, North American university music departments have increasingly added jazz studies programs to their departments. This ongoing institutionalizing of jazz in higher education naturally raises many questions regarding the implications of putting an improvisatory and African American musical culture into a

formal music conservatory setting. This thesis seeks to address these implications, as well as the following questions: in an age where any competent jazz musician under the age of fifty is much more likely than not to have majored in jazz in their collegiate years, how does this effect knowledge production and musical style? What musical and cultural values are placed at the forefront in said conservatory settings? How do university jazz programs relate to both their local jazz scenes and the broader contemporary jazz community? What are the economic and demographic implications of a music scene produced by higher education? Will the current model of jazz knowledge production move the music further from its African American roots? Using Temple University's jazz studies program as a representative site, this paper seeks to examine the many ways jazz in the university continually shapes and very much defines modern jazz and the ideologies that surround it.

Institutionalizing Jazz in the Academy

Jazz pedagogy has long been an important aspect in the development of jazz styles, though for most of its history, this has mostly been at the level of informal student/teacher relationships and community networks, as Paul Berliner has shown (1994). Jazz musicians often described touring stints with well-known master musicians using such terms as “graduate school” (Porter 1998), while Ralph Ellison once referred to the late night jam session as the jazz musician's “true academy” (Soules 2004:278). Even if this learning did not take place in formal classroom settings, the production and reception of knowledge was valued on the level of such official institutions. For several

decades, informal networks of knowledge transmission ensured a healthy influx of younger, trained jazz musicians. With all respect to Berliner, however, his two decade old study now reads as lacking in coverage of the university jazz programs that now strongly and unavoidably shape the modern world of jazz and its knowledge production. Where Berliner's study focused on veteran musicians that had learned their trade before the wide emergence of these sorts of conservatory programs, a similar study of active jazz musicians today could not avoid mention of the university's role in knowledge transmission. While the sorts of informal master/apprentice models Berliner focuses on form a central aspect of jazz university education, the institutional framework in which they now take place must be examined if we are to understand how jazz knowledge and practice is currently disseminated.

Jazz university programs did not proliferate until the 1970s and especially the 1980s, as jazz actively began to be regarded by grant agencies and the public as an important American art form. The soon widespread establishment of jazz conservatories was preceded by the entrance of prominent African American jazz musicians into university teaching positions in burgeoning ethnic studies and African American studies departments in the early 1970s, or as instructors of jazz courses in Western classical conservatories (Porter 2002:234, Langguth 2010:154, Marquis 1998). This period coincided with a sense of urgency on the part of jazz critics to establish jazz as an art form with a canonic repertoire and narrative, resulting in increased institutional funding for jazz foundations such as the Collective Black Artists and eventually, Jazz at Lincoln Center (Porter 2002:229, Gioia 2011:355). Such grant proposals often presented jazz as

art music by adhering to classical terminology, setting the stage for the establishment of university jazz curriculums that would likewise follow classical conservatory models (Porter 2002).

In this thesis, I often use the term “jazz conservatory program” interchangeably with “jazz studies program” as a way to indicate that the subject of my research centers on the university jazz programs oriented on the areas of instrumental or vocal performance, composition, and arranging. As will become clear, these programs often follow the established model of the Western classical music conservatory in their pedagogical method and privileging of the autonomous musical work. Though essentially acting as conservatories, these programs are often named simply “jazz studies.” I do not refer to the “jazz studies” undertaken by academic scholars in various humanities and social science disciplines, as the great work of these researchers often does not intersect with the jazz conservatory programs I chose as my subject of study.

Temple University’s Jazz Studies Program

My ethnographic research was conducted between the autumn of 2013 and the spring of 2014. The research primarily consisted of interviews with recent alumni of Temple University’s jazz studies program, where I also graduated with a jazz composition degree in 2011. In the larger scheme of university jazz studies programs, Temple offers a representative case, because it follows broader patterns of university jazz pedagogy while also presenting unique traits as a jazz school. I would hypothesize this to be the case for many jazz university programs throughout North America, neither wholly

immune to the standardizing effects of institutionalization nor fully homogenized in their character. Research at additional schools with widely varying environmental circumstances is necessary to test that assumption, but I believe Temple's situation to be reflective of the typical jazz studies program in this regard.

The Department of Jazz Studies forms a part of the Boyer College of Music and Dance at Temple University, located in north Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. As of the 2013-2014 academic year, the jazz studies faculty consists of four full-time professors (including the director, Terrell Stafford), as well as twenty additional adjunct faculty members working in the areas of instrumental and vocal instruction.¹ This total of twenty-four jazz instructors at Boyer is an impressive number for a jazz program, but actually far dwarfed by the amount of faculty members of Temple's large classical department that numbers in the hundreds, including a number of specialists on each orchestral instrument and piano, several musicologists and composers, and many vocal instructors. The jazz department's faculty is nonetheless widely sourced and accomplished, including instructors both living and performing in the Philadelphia area as well as those commuting from nearby New York City.

The number of undergraduate students in Temple's jazz studies program varies,² but usually averages around twenty students per class year. Students come from both the surrounding greater Philadelphia area, often to take advantage of Temple's relatively affordable in-state tuition rate (around \$15,000 per year as of 2014), as well as from out-

¹ These figures were pulled from the Boyer College of Music and Dance website. See <http://www.temple.edu/boyer/about/people/faculty.asp#jazz> (accessed 6/10/14).

² Temple University does not currently offer graduate degrees in jazz studies.

of-state. Temple also maintains a strong relationship with the jazz program at the Amsterdam Conservatory in the Netherlands, with an exchange program being offered to benefit students of both schools. Though I was not able to obtain precise demographic information of Temple's jazz studies program in particular, the university wide enrollment of 36,855 students is estimated by Forbes to consist of 59.76% students identifying as White; 13.98% as African American; 10.03% as Asian or Pacific Islander; and 4.39% as Latino or Hispanic.³ Based on my four years of study at Temple, I would estimate the jazz studies program to roughly coincide with these numbers, with perhaps greater numbers of White students and fewer Asian or Pacific Islanders. The head of admissions at the Boyer College of Music and Dance, James Short, estimates there to be three African American or Latino students out of every class of twenty, with very few Asian students, though he notes an increase in international applications, especially from China (e-mail comm. 5/20/14). Short was unable to disclose any information on students' economic standing, but based on my conversations with my informants and my own experience at Temple, I would estimate most students to be of a middle class or upper middle class family background. Though the gender breakdown of Temple University at large is fairly even, the gender disparity in the jazz department is far greater. Short estimates a ratio of about 15% female to 85% male students, also noting that nearly all women are jazz vocal majors, with very few female instrumentalists. This gendering of vocal practice evidenced at Temple is consistent with jazz's history, though the last few years have seen a slight increase in the number of woman instrumentalists at Temple

³ See <http://www.forbes.com/colleges/temple-university/> (accessed 6/10/14).

(about one per year). The breakdown of the jazz faculty also roughly correlates to these numbers, including three women out of a total of twenty-four instructors (one is an instrumentalist), as well as six African American faculty members, including the director, Terrell Stafford.

Temple's accolades as a jazz department include performances by its big band at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City, the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., and the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia, as well as regular trips to perform at the Amsterdam Conservatory. It also boasts a Grammy nomination for a composition by former faculty member Bill Cunliffe for symphony orchestra and jazz quartet.⁴ On an individual level, students of Temple have performed with accomplished musicians inside and outside the world of jazz, e.g., alumnus Danny Janklow was a Thelonious Monk competition finalist. Both alumni and currently enrolled students are active on the Philadelphia jazz scene, with many also regularly performing in New York. The Center City Jazz Festival, which has held annual multi-venue concerts in Philadelphia for the past three years, was founded by Temple alumnus Ernest Stuart and has included performances from a number of former or current Temple students and faculty (Brady 2014). Temple's strong contribution to the Philadelphia jazz scene, its steady production of talented and accomplished musicians, and its general reputation thus indicate its importance as a music making site worthy of deeper study that can also serve as an insight into broader trends of jazz university institutionalization.

⁴ See <http://www.temple.edu/boyer/about/BCMDRecords.asp> (accessed 6/10/14).

Selection of Interview Subjects

I had originally become connected with all of my informants through my time at Temple, so the graduation years of my informants fall within just a few years of my own. I have avoided inserting my own anecdotal account of my experience at Temple so as to not delve into auto-ethnography, though I draw on my years of study there when necessary to clarify or confirm certain basic details of the jazz studies curriculum and Philadelphia jazz scene. The eleven total interviews (ten with Temple alumni, one with a veteran Philadelphia jazz musician) were conducted either in person, over the phone, or through e-mail.

I chose my interview subjects with the goal of having the most representative voices possible, in terms of the above demographic figures and what I consider to be the most common post-graduation career path of Temple jazz alumni. While Temple has produced relatively more “known” musicians on the international jazz scene (most notably bassist and producer Derrick Hodge of the Robert Glasper Experiment), the majority of its alumni are musically successful in more humble ways. Most of my informants have day jobs to augment their nightly gigs, most commonly consisting of either teaching private music lessons or a regular office job. Nonetheless, all are still involved in music in some form, and most of them still regularly perform jazz in the Philadelphia or surrounding areas. The circumstances of my informants are thus representative of the typical post-collegiate career of the Temple jazz alumnus. My informants may not be superstars on the international jazz scene, but they do on some

level have a career in music, surpassing Alice Marquis's pessimistic assertion that only 10% of jazz majors would make music their career (Marquis 1998:122).

I also chose my informants to roughly coincide with the demographic figures of Temple's jazz studies program, though information regarding class background and income level of jazz students at Temple is lacking, in both the larger numbers and my own selection pool. Nonetheless, as most students entering the jazz studies program at Temple come directly from high school, I have attempted to reflect this in my interview pool, with only one student who began attending Temple in his mid-twenties. In terms of racial identity, seven of my ten informants from Temple are White and/or Jewish American (Chris Coyle, Patrick Fink, Ben Freedlander, Ryan McNeely, David Nord, Nicole Saphos, and Eli Sklarsky), with three African American participants (Kelvin Grant, Chris Stevens, and Elijah Thomas). Only one informant is female (Nicole Saphos), unfortunately reflective of the limited representative of women in jazz as a whole.

Though I attempted to make my interview pool as wide as possible, by selecting students who I perceived to have varying backgrounds and outlooks on jazz, I do not claim that this study represents *the* opinion of the entire alumni body at Temple. It is also highly likely that some of the characterizations offered by my informants in this study about Temple might not entirely hold to be true even just a few years hence. Departments change, and I would not assume Temple to be a static exception. Furthermore, I do not believe the situation at Temple stands for all jazz education programs in the United States; as my research shows, Temple is deeply defined by its relationship to the city of Philadelphia and its local jazz scene. I do believe, however, that Temple can act as a

representative case study that can offer insight to wider issues in jazz education, as certain trends emerge in these interviews. While this study should primarily be considered specific to Temple University in the years 2005-2013, it can also introduce some challenges to current conceptions of institutionalization and suggest new questions to explore in future research.

Black Nationalism vs. American Universalism

An ongoing theme of scholarly discourse on jazz for several decades has been the push and pull of ideologies of Black cultural nationalism versus that of American universalism. That is, “jazz is an African American musical and cultural achievement and should primarily serve the Black community” versus “jazz is an achievement of American democracy and should speak to everyone” (Kofsky 1998, Monson 2007). An important aspect of this research involves the examination of how these discourses have evolved as a result of jazz’s move into a university conservatory setting. This institutionalized setting has carried with it a tendency to emphasize musical elements most valued by Western schools of thought: that is, harmony, melody, form, instrumental technique, repertoire, and orchestration. While undoubtedly important aspects of jazz performance, improvisation, and composition, the championing of these elements comes at the expense of the more nuanced aspects of jazz musicality, that is, timbre, rhythmic nuance, a taste for atonal or “free jazz,” and so forth.

When they do broach the topic of jazz education, scholars frequently hypothesize that university jazz programs would tend to lead to a homogenization of the aesthetics of

jazz (Porter 2002:315, Friedwald et al. 2002:205, Gioia 2011:380). If such a complex and constantly evolving music is to be taught in a four-year university, it needs to be boiled down to an easily teachable methodology that could then be replicated in many different settings. While institutionalization does not have to entail conservatism, with organizations such as the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians holding a particular avant-garde focus, the larger trend of jazz institutionalization has tended to emphasize more conservative elements. My research here has shown, however, that conservatism in pedagogy does not necessarily lead to uniformity of sound in outcome, as students display a strong degree of agency and critical thinking as to how they digest and then reproduce jazz forms. In addition, local communities also still exert a strong influence on a region's particular jazz scene and subsequent musical style. For example, informants at Temple University have repeatedly referenced the school's encompassing city of Philadelphia as an important factor in what kind of jazz is valued in that local community and thus at Temple itself. Informant observations of such relatively nearby cities as Pittsburgh, New York City, and Washington D.C. point to different situations and performing contexts in each locale. While there certainly is a reasonable fear that jazz may begin to sound more similar as a result of uniform methods of pedagogy, the results of this project call for a greater crediting of the agency of both jazz individuals and local scenes. Nonetheless, university programs in vastly differing locations will need to be further examined in order to fully explore this homogenization hypotheses.

Temple University's Place in the Philadelphia Jazz Scene

Before continuing with particular topics in Temple's jazz studies program, I will now first define Temple's relationship to the Philadelphia jazz scene, which interview subjects repeatedly stressed as an attractive quality in their initial decision to attend Temple. Philadelphia houses two major jazz studies university programs, both of which contribute to the majority of active musicians on the jazz scene. The subject of this study, Temple University, is a publicly-funded research university with its main campus located in north Philadelphia. The campus is about a twenty-minute subway ride from Center City Philadelphia, where most of the performing venues are located. Temple's main "rival" in the Philadelphia jazz world is the University of the Arts (UArts), a private arts school located in the theatre and concert hall district just south of Center City. Though informants often draw comparisons to the activity and identity of UArts (perceived to be slightly more "contemporary" to Temple's "traditional"), the schools are rivals only in the sense that they are the only two places in Philadelphia to study jazz at the university level. In reality, many lecturers and instrumental instructors teach at both schools in the city, and students from Temple and UArts regularly collaborate on gigs in Center City. The difference between schools is discussed mostly in terms of a perceived "sound" or musical identity pertaining to each, and in their respective campus settings. Many of my informants mentioned that when considering schools to pursue jazz study, they chose Temple for its college campus environment, which UArts lacks.

Most of the performing venues for jazz in Philadelphia are located downtown in Center City Philadelphia. These jazz gigs are often housed in locations that do not offer

jazz nightly, but rather include jazz concerts semi-weekly. Furthermore, these venues are constantly changing in their involvement in the jazz scene, with few consistently offering live jazz for more than a span of five years or so. The mainstay in this scene, however, is Chris's Jazz Café in the heart of Center City, where Temple and UArts students and faculty can be found performing one night and internationally touring musicians the next. Though Chris's offers live jazz every night of the week, many of my informants expressed displeasure towards working at Chris's, feeling that the abundance of jazz musicians produced by the universities has lowered both the quality and economic value of performances there. Live jazz can also be found semi-weekly at such sites as Time, Sassafra, the Loews Hotel, and Milkboy in the Center City or Old City area, and at Melodies Café and other locations in the Philadelphia Main Line area of surrounding suburban communities. More formal concert hall performances can be found on Temple's campus in the Howard Gittis Student Center and at the Baptist Temple Church, as well as at the Kimmel Center in the theatre district. The "sound" of Philadelphia jazz mostly consists of a neo-conservative, "straight-ahead" style of acoustic jazz, a characterization I will elaborate on shortly. As with any musical community, however, there are regular avant-garde outliers to this "concentric circle," to borrow from Bruno Nettl (1995: 88), which places "straight-ahead" jazz at the center.

Numerous informants note that though there are plenty of places to perform jazz in Philadelphia, with new locales arising regularly, the jazz audience largely consists of fellow university students, alumni, or faculty, with only a small dedicated jazz following of non-musicians. Nonetheless, Temple affiliates are deeply involved in the jazz activity

that occurs in Philadelphia, which many of my informants cited as a reason they became aware of Temple's reputation as a jazz school in Philadelphia. Drummer Eli Sklarsky notes his perception as a high school student in Vorhees, New Jersey (roughly 20 minutes outside of Philadelphia) of Temple's role in the Philly jazz scene:

Temple was definitely one of the schools I had wanted to go to, mostly because I knew a lot of people who had gone there and I had seen a lot of people on the scene. I had even expressed an interest in a lot of teachers that were there, going out in high school on the scene a little bit. Seeing especially drummers like Dan Managhan, I knew he was the guy that I would have the opportunity to study with at Temple. And that kind of made the decision for me (pers. comm., 12/19/13).

Sklarsky notes Temple drum instructor Dan Monaghan as a primary reason for his desire to attend Temple, having first become exposed to his future instructor's playing by attending jazz performances in the Philadelphia area. Indeed, most students interviewed were attracted to the strength of the faculty at Temple's jazz studies program, clearly valuing a similar kind of potential master-apprentice relationship that Berliner details in his study. At Temple, as is the case in most university conservatories whether of a classical or jazz nature, students have the opportunity to study with a private teacher for an hour a week for the entirety of their four-year duration in the program, so naturally the quality of the instructors would be an important factor in choosing which jazz studies program to enter. Chris Stevens, a trumpet player originally from nearby Camden, New Jersey, describes what led him to choose Temple when he decided to go back to school in his mid-twenties:

I entertained the idea of Temple because of Terrell Stafford's reputation. I also sought enrollment at Rutgers where I would have studied with Prof. William Fielder, Terrell's teacher. It was too late for Rutgers but not

Temple, so Prof. Fielder strongly suggested Temple and studying with Terell Stafford. I'm glad I listened! (e-mail comm., 4/19/14).

Stevens references Terell Stafford, the director of Temple's jazz studies program and a renowned performer in his non-academic career as a trumpet player, including engagements with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, Mingus Big Band, and Village Vanguard Orchestra, amongst many others. Having received a degree in jazz studies himself from Rutgers University, Stafford in his multi-decade career has performed with such jazz luminaries as McCoy Tyner, Benny Golson, Kenny Barron, Jimmy Heath, and Shirley Scott, often in the neo-conservative, hard bop acoustic rooted style that Temple also emulates. Stafford is well regarded by my informants for his role in transforming Temple's jazz studies program to become more internationally regarded, having initiated the connection with the Amsterdam Conservatory as well as having brought in many talented and more "name" musicians as faculty members and master class lecturers. Elijah Thomas, a flutist originally from Philadelphia, elaborates on the reputation and role of Stafford:

I saw the brilliant amount of faculty that they had at the time teaching exclusively at Temple due to Terell, and now that's only increased in terms of caliber of who we have there. The amount of students who attend who are still very much local to the area, and the fact that it's so well connected due to the faculty and those students to the immediate scene in Philly. . . . I thought that was brilliant because, you know, Philly has such a rich jazz tradition. So many people have come here, and that's so very much apparent in how it is we're taught at Temple (pers. comm., 12/19/13).

As Thomas notes, Temple's reputation and strength faculty largely rests on the vision and activity of its director. Temple's connection to the Philadelphia jazz scene is strengthened by its selection of faculty, many of whom are active participants in the Philadelphia jazz

scene, and all of whom together work to solidify Temple's aesthetic or "sound" as a jazz school. Thomas also emphasizes Temple's expression of Philadelphia's rich jazz history, which he further characterizes:

Again, because Philly is such a city steeped in jazz tradition, particularly a tradition of players that have been from here, like John Coltrane, Lee Morgan, Bobby Timmons . . .

MN: Yeah, it kinda tends to go that way . . .

Yeah, we're still very much immersed in hard bop, you know like that urban city feel, like swing, something that's more grooving. . . . There's something to be said for Philly establishing its own identity. The one thing that I've noticed however, with Philadelphia, with how it is we think and feel about music, is that we're so prideful to the point of being standoffish, adversarial, and very protective of something we feel entitled to. Like if you go to New York, it's so expansive in terms of its population, the demographics within those populations, the musicians within those demographics that all play all different types of musicians that there's a little pocket for everything but at the same time everything blends together. Which I think is absolutely fantastic. And I think that's really what's given New York itself an identity, that constant change of pace. Philadelphia identity is this stark opposite of that. We like what we're doing here, we're stuck with what we do, which is always this neo-hard bop sort of idea. But we're unwilling to change that in a way that might make people attracted to it again, which is very sad.

MN: By people, you mean the public?

I think public and I mean just musicians themselves. 'Cause if you get musicians from any place, I betcha if they come here they'll appreciate what it is that Philly's doing, which is still holding down that tradition, but at the same time they'll stay a little longer and realize they're boxed in. You know, you can only go so far in what they're doing here because this is what we do. We hold it down, do our hard bop thing, and we'll see what happens. If people don't like it, whatever (pers. comm., 12/19/13).

Thomas's comments encapsulate how Philadelphia as a jazz community has typically been regarded: working class, traditional-minded, stylistically hard bop, and as a sort of training ground for the eventual move of the more accomplished musicians to

better gigs in New York. Thomas cites John Coltrane, Bobby Timmons, and Lee Morgan as examples of the many jazz musicians who grew up and developed musically in Philadelphia, but who eventually all made the jump to New York's more prestigious nightclubs (Porter 1998). While New York is often characterized as cutting edge and constantly concerned with innovation, Philadelphia has long been its more conservative counterpart, where a "tradition" could persist unimpeded by that constant search for the new. Conceptions of the "tradition" are thus crucial to understanding how Philadelphia as a jazz scene is often regarded by its participants.

Temple University and the Jazz "Tradition"

As Philadelphia has and continues to be considered a more traditionally minded jazz scene, especially in relation to nearby New York, many students chose to attend Temple due to the school's reputation as a "traditional" school. Sklarsky notes this connection as a reason he came to study at Temple:

Maybe this was subconscious but there seemed to be a concept of learning tradition and straight-ahead jazz at this school which made it a little bit different from other schools in the area, versus a more modern take at University of the Arts. I think I was kind of interested in learning that straight-ahead dialect (pers. comm., 12/19/13).

Ryan McNeely, a guitarist originally from Westchester, Pennsylvania, gives his take:

Temple skews towards tradition but there is plenty of room for students to indulge any kind of music they are interested in. More importantly, there are good players available to participate in any kind of project you'd want to start. It does seem that other schools put out a higher percentage of non-straight-ahead players but I don't necessarily think that's a good thing. Temple's approach of forcing you to learn the tradition while entertaining the creative was perfect for me (e-mail comm., 4/14/14).

Most of my interviewees reference “the tradition” in some way, commonly understood by my informants to refer to a particular brand of jazz stemming from the bebop practices developed in the 1940s, continuing with the hard bop sound of the ‘50s and ‘60s, and stopping at about the time electric instruments began being introduced to jazz in the late ‘60s. This “tradition,” often also termed “straight-ahead” as it typically excludes free jazz, consists of developed instrumental facility, emphasis on individual solo improvisations, adept ensemble interaction, a standard set of jazz repertoire often derived from *The Real Book* (an official version of jazz fake books), and a generally conservative jazz outlook. This “standard way of playing jazz,” as Derek Bailey refers to it (1992:48), has its historic roots in what George Lewis calls the Afrological perspective of music in that it stems from these jazz practices, especially in its focus on discipline and “finding one’s own voice” (Lewis 2004a). It consists, however, of less regard for the resistive and social potential noted by Lewis while more accurately resembling Romantic conceptions of the individual artist’s creative genius. As will be later discussed, the standardization of this “tradition” of jazz, as it is commonly practiced and transmitted in university programs such as Temple, largely resulted from the efforts of Wynton Marsalis and Jazz at Lincoln Center, whose success directly informed the university institutionalization of jazz (Porter 2002:321). Though far from the only “tradition” in jazz, in the context of current discourse amongst jazz musicians, this is the characterization my informants imply when they reference “the tradition,” even when they recognize, as nearly all of them do, that there is more to jazz than this one set of stylizations. When I reference “the tradition” in my writing, I refer to the neo-

conservative set of jazz practices and canonic repertoire assumed by my informants in their use of the term, though as will become clear, former students actively contest this apparent tradition and the limitations it imposes on the music.

Comments from former students illustrate Temple's wide reputation as a strongly connected school to study jazz, but also a particular brand of jazz, that is, the kind of acoustic, straight-ahead jazz on which Philadelphia bases its reputation. In some sense, it can be hard to firmly attribute Temple's preference for this style of "traditional" jazz as originating from the school's connection to Philadelphia and its hard bop jazz history, or as emerging out of broader patterns of institutionalization that have tended to fixate on the more conservative elements of jazz. Further study would be required to examine the particular aesthetic and stylistic preferences of various campuses across the country and the relation of each to their local environment. Nonetheless, what is clear is that students consistently first acknowledge Temple's emphasis on tradition and then attribute that preference to the school's location in Philadelphia. Even if broader forces of jazz canonization and institutionalization are more responsible in shaping Temple's jazz studies curriculum than the local Philadelphia scene (as if the relative impact of the local versus the national could ever be clearly defined that easily), students often perceive Philadelphia to be a main driving force in shaping Temple's foregrounding of the "the traditions." As McNeely and others note, however, though Temple strongly leans towards a certain side of a perhaps overly dichotomized traditional-modern binary, students themselves display a great amount of agency in their approach to contemporary jazz, a point to which I will return.

Interviews with alumni repeatedly stress Temple's focus on "the tradition," though opinions on the usefulness of that tradition vary from student to student. On the one hand, students praise the practical training in harmonic practice, improvisation, and ensemble playing they received as a result of their study at Temple, having been given ample opportunity to develop skills in ear training, harmonic theory, repertoire knowledge, and practical skills of ensemble playing. On the other hand, few students did not see some kind of drawback or fault in the reliance on a certain codified teaching of the traditional elements of jazz, even as they recognized the benefits they received as a result of their formal study.

A cynical view of the teaching of standard jazz practices in an institutional setting such as a university might decry such practices as ultimately leading to a death of innovation and destruction of important social context (Ake 2012:242). Though there are merits to these concerns, which I will address, there is also a very practical element in learning the traditional skills that is often forgot when only considering higher ethical quandaries. For one, students became well equipped with the practical skills needed to work a gig outside the campus setting, often in a student's first year of study. Tom Moon, a veteran saxophonist and music journalist who regularly collaborates with musicians from Temple in the Philadelphia area, explains:

The first thing that struck me about Temple is that almost across the board, most of the musicians were prepared just to be out, play a four hour jazz gig without batting an eye, and they were professional about it. The understanding of what was expected in the "work world" was very clear and was obviously being communicated through the faculty. I think it's probably through experiences like the jam sessions, it's probably a lot of different things. But without sort of trying to break it down and pin it down you can certainly see that unlike situations where people only study

in their school setting, there's enough going on in Philadelphia and enough awareness on the part of the faculty that suggests that part of their responsibility is to prepare people for work (pers. comm. 12/19/13).

Moon links Temple students' ability to perform working gigs to both Temple's location in an active Philadelphia jazz community and the efforts of the school's faculty, who impart a readiness via the teaching of standard jazz practices. At Temple, students are equipped with a deep knowledge of repertoire, are able to adeptly navigate any set of chord changes and song forms, and are able to apply their own improvisatory voice to a wide array of professional engagements. Most important to many students, however, is the strong community and networking opportunity Temple's jazz studies program fosters, which allows them to employ what they have learned of "the tradition" in the working world of jazz night clubs and jam sessions.

Jazz Networking and Informal Sites of Learning

Students most commonly cited the ability to network as a particular strength of the jazz program at Temple. Nicole Saphos, a bassist and vocalist originally from Southern California and now performing in the Washington D.C.-Baltimore area, speaks about the advantages of networking:

All of my teachers and peers at Temple were very active in the Philadelphia jazz scene. Having that type of community and support system was essential to me, especially as an inexperienced freshman (e-mail comm., 4/14/14).

McNeely elaborates:

Playing with and learning from my peers was most useful. That and non-formal learning with teachers. Theory classes and ensembles were useful

but developing playing relationships with other great musicians advanced my playing the fastest.

Temple makes up a large portion of Philadelphia's jazz scene. Temple students seem to attend more gigs than anyone else in the city. Jazz in Philadelphia is largely propped up by the schools. I wouldn't have a career in music without the people I met directly or indirectly through Temple (e-mail comm., 4/14/14).⁵

While comments from McNeely and others place a value on the knowledge gained from musical study in classrooms, students tend to value more highly the connections they were able to make through Temple. As Moon noted, Temple's learning does not simply take place in the classroom, but actively extends to the encompassing jazz community in Philadelphia. An attempt to pin down what transmission of knowledge takes place at Temple could then not be restricted to on-campus learning, but would have to extend to include sites of music making beyond the classroom, for instance, late night jazz club performances and coffee shop jam sessions. Many of these extended sites are facilitated through instructors themselves, as McNeely notes in his crediting of "non-formal" instruction from faculty. Formalized musical pedagogy in this case thus includes informal settings that reach beyond the bounded institution and constitute an important part of students' overall education. This challenges Bruno Nettl's assertion that "the type of jazz performed in the university does not really correspond to the important types of jazz heard in the world," as in this case, the very same jazz *is* performed in "real" performance settings (Nettl 1995:93). Future examinations of formal musical institutions thus should expand their coverage to include these sites of informal musicking.

⁵ Chris Stevens contradicts McNeely's characterization of the Temple student body's activity on the local scene, contending that he more often encounters students from the University of the Arts in his performance circles (e-mail comm., 4/19/14).

Chris Coyle, a bassist originally from suburban Philadelphia, expands on this breaking down of the formal and informal setting:

Temple is definitely connected very strongly to the jazz scene. The “scene” in Philly isn't that big really so with a few Philly veterans on the staff there's not much of a difference between learning in the class room vs. learning at someone's gig or at a session. While Temple doesn't necessarily connect students with every music circle in Philly (like the West Philly “alternative” thing, Indie/experimental rock, etc.) you can find Temple students and grads in every kind of musical situation in Philadelphia and beyond. Going through the jazz program really prepared me for almost any gig. As far as life outside of music, the best part about Temple music was the social scene. It was such a great collection of beautiful people and I really think that it was more of a “family” vibe that what you might get at other schools (e-mail comm., 4/9/14).

Coyle attributes Temple's connectedness to the scene foremost as a result of its strong faculty core, many of whom regularly work in the same Philadelphia jazz clubs where Temple students begin playing soon after beginning in the program. As Coyle notes, the line between the classroom and the “gig” is very blurred, as the same figures often traverse between both fields of music making, especially in a Philadelphia jazz scene that is not as expansive as New York. Coyle also attests to the gig readiness that Moon alluded to, emphasizing the general elevation of “musicianship” that occurs as a result of study. Finally, Coyle speaks of a broader social connection that he felt formed outside of musical activity, a “family vibe” that speaks to the strength of networking that occurs in Temple's jazz studies program. When regarding conservatory institutions as “cultural systems,” as in the case of Henry Kingsbury (1988), this informal and extramusical community should not be disregarded.

Stevens gives his account of his own networking successes that directly resulted from his time at Temple:

As far as how it affected my career, networking has been a critical part of my “success.” Collaborating with my classmates has opened many doors. For example, working with Jermaine Bryson and Brass Heaven lead to reconnecting with Jeff Bradshaw and consequently working with the Roots and other major artists. For my band and personal artistry, it was the support of my teachers! The fact that they would listen and encourage me was probably one of the main reasons I even attempted to start a band (e-mail comm., 4/19/14).

For Stevens, both fellow students at Temple and the faculty in the program were beneficial to his performing and arranging career. Trumpeter Ben Freedlander recalls the influence his own instructor:

I think my education has been invaluable in helping me with my production work, mostly because it just really helped me become a much better musician than when I started. I know people say you can learn stuff on your own, which is true to an extent, but I had some amazing teachers at Temple, particularly my trumpet teacher Mike Natale. If it wasn't for him, I might have actually quit playing trumpet, but I'm glad he got me to stick with it because playing trumpet has opened up a lot of doors for me in terms of networking as a producer (e-mail comm., 5/1/14).

Sklarsky further notes the ways in which Temple students are strongly connected to both Temple University and its reputation, and to their particular private instructors:

The opportunities given to me at Temple simply because I was a jazz student at Temple gave me the gateway to the community of the music scene in Philadelphia. Education wise, yea there's probably a lot of things you could have learned on your own if you wanted to study privately. A lot of the jazz classes in my opinion were kind of . . . you got out of them whatever you put into them. They weren't going to kick anyone out for not performing at the highest caliber. But they were giving them the opportunity to learn as much as they wanted to from a lot of these high-class, some world-renowned teachers.

But after especially my freshman year and meeting a lot of different people, I realized that the people you're going to school with and your teachers are also the people that are on the scene. And in this city specifically it seems like if you studied jazz at Temple, and you went into a jazz club, people knew who you associated with. Or people had

expectations of you, which is maybe a good thing or bad thing, I don't know.

When you say for instance that you've studied at Temple or with a specific teacher, there's a certain expectation of not necessarily your ability or caliber to play but your style or the way in which you play. As a college student, if you studied with a certain person then you've taken everything from them and you're going to play in a style that they've taught you. Which is sometimes the case, but often times not always the case, and I've seen it turn off a lot of people. It didn't turn me off at all.

MN: It turned off students? Or . . .

Absolutely. I've seen it. It seems like I've seen the program or certain programs turn off students from . . .

MN: Because they're expected to a fit certain way?

Yeah, 'cause at the university they're expected to fit a certain role I think. Say you go to a university that is a little bit more into a modern sound and avant-garde exploration where you're more interested in studying traditional jazz, you're not necessarily gonna fit in. Or vice versa (pers. comm., 12/19/13).

Sklarksy emphasizes the strong influence private instructors have not only on their students' playing, but also on their reputation on the scene as well. Students are often expected, until proven otherwise, to sound like their teachers, or more broadly, like the jazz programs from which they come. As Temple carries the reputation of a "straight-ahead" school, identifying oneself as a Temple student immediately calls to mind these preconceptions, even as students are given ample opportunity to assert their own voice. As Sklarksy notes, that preconceived notion has the potential to turn off students who might not fit the straight-ahead mold a particular school is associated with, in this case an emphasis on acoustic hard bop traditions.

In sum, alumni regularly acknowledge both Temple's reputation as a traditionally "hard bop" school and its successful connection to the larger scene, resulting in an active student body who can regularly be heard performing at such Philadelphia venues as Chris's Jazz Café, Milkboy, and Time, amongst others. Students are well prepared for "the gig" as a result of their disciplined study in "the tradition." The learning of a vast repertoire, technical facility and instrumental proficiency, developed harmonic concepts, ensemble interaction, and improvisatory skills that takes place at Temple produces the kind of students able to perform working engagements. Temple's selection of faculty well connected to the Philadelphia jazz scene brings this gig readiness to life, where students can employ what they learned of "the tradition" in the classroom in a performance setting, and in a sense, continue their education.

The Paradox of Jazz Education

Even students that recognized the strength of learning a traditional jazz model, however, recognized the many shortcomings and trappings "the tradition" as taught by a university can hold. Recognizing "what's left out" of jazz pedagogy does not necessarily entail a denouncing of the core traditions, however, as informants regularly acknowledge that it is ultimately up to each student to apply the structures of jazz theory and standardization as he or she sees fit. A learning of the tradition is still viewed as essential, but not the entire picture. Referring to the learning of jazz theory structures, both Kelvin Grant and Eli Sklarsky recall some variation of the old adage "you can't run before you walk" (e-mail comm., 5/26/14; pers. comm., 12/19/13). Nonetheless, informants in

interviews were often eager to discuss what they felt they should have received more coverage of, even while acknowledging the importance of foundational practices as well as a reality that everything cannot reasonably be covered in the short amount of time students are enrolled in the program.

The most unanimous complaint amongst interview subjects was the school's poor training in the business side of music, including such logistical skills as self-promotion and marketing, fundraising and crowd-sourcing, grant writing, general issues of professionalism, band leading skills, and other practical concerns. Even while students felt they had gained valuable networking opportunities, they did not feel they had formally learned the skills of networking or any of the music industry strategies that are a necessary part of establishing a career as a professional musician. Stevens opines, "I think that in most aspects of education the courses are built to teach you how to get jobs and not how to be independent or how to create jobs" (e-mail comm., 4/19/14), mirroring Alice Marquis's critique that the jazz university could not hope to expand the market for jazz (Marquis 1998:117). The school helped prepare students through a cementing of instrumental or vocal skills to earn gigs as professional musicians, but not to creatively expand the market in order to create new opportunities that extend beyond the late night session. This aspect will become more crucial when considering the economic reality of jazz in the twenty-first century that the university also encompasses, a topic I will return to later in the paper.

Former Temple students also hold varying opinions on what musical considerations could have also been included in the curriculum at Temple. In terms of

genre considerations, students recognize the school's hard bop leanings and subsequently lament a lesser focus on such styles as Brazilian bossa nova, jazz-rock fusion, popular music, the avant-garde or "free" tradition, pre-1940s "classic jazz," and even classical music. The last is particularly interesting; from the perspective of the jazz studies major, Western art music is treated as a sort of Other, a non-jazz music that has the potential to enrich and enhance an at times predictable hard bop jazz tradition. Chris Coyle, whose decision to study at Temple was made partly due to the school's strong classical program in addition to its jazz program, cites his training in Temple's classical department as having strengthened his technical facility, performance experience, and compositional outlook (phone comm., 4/10/14).⁶ Patrick Fink, a pianist originally from Pittsburgh, sees classical music as having a particular potential to advance a jazz player's conception of harmony:

I wish that I would have seen other jazz piano players at Temple checking out Prokofiev or Debussy. That's such an untapped resource as a jazz piano player, like if you ever get bored of voicings, go check out that shit. You'll have a field day, it's awesome (pers. comm., 12/20/13).

In this sense, piano scores from Western art composers act as material for jazz pianists to incorporate into their own harmonic concepts, extending their understanding of harmony as built at Temple. Indeed, students regularly cite the teaching of jazz harmony as a particular strength of Temple, often crediting it as leading to many creative realizations that extend beyond jazz. David Nord, a guitarist originally from Princeton, New Jersey,

⁶ Not all students saw instruction in classical courses to be beneficial. Nicole Saphos considered the required semester of beginning classical piano to be "unnecessary" (e-mail comm., 4/14/14), while Ryan McNeely regarded the required conducting class as a "waste of time" (e-mail comm., 4/14/14).

speaks about the influence jazz harmony as taught by Temple has had on his electronic music produced under the moniker Spooky Bard:

Obviously I think it's me trying to take my jazz bag of tricks and put it into a more culturally relevant context, which is this beat scene kind of stuff. The goal is to be able to attract both kinds of audiences, both dudes who just like cool beats and noises and off-kilter kind of rhythmic feels and dudes who like harmony and melody. But I definitely think the stuff I learned at Temple is very helpful for that; they gave you a lot of ways to look at harmony. So when people listen to my music, one of the things that tends to stand out for them is my harmonic concept, and I definitely think that is a little bit of just me being weird but a lot of it is just stuff I learned at Temple (pers. comm., 12/20/13).⁷

Though students generally laud the strength of jazz theory courses taught at Temple, they also recognize the limitations of a kind of codified pedagogy of theory for a genre that has historically sought to continually innovate. Using chord-scale theory as an example, Fink laments what he feels to be an over-emphasis on one kind of emphasized approach to jazz theory and improvisation:

Right, so for instance when they talk about chord-scale theory, like here's a C Major⁷, what scale can you play on that or what scales can you play over that? And then when it's time to play your solo, okay here, I'm gonna play a C Major scale. And oh, now it's an Eb chord, now I'm gonna play an Eb scale. That kind of thinking, that's one way to get to be Herbie Hancock, but there's, let's say, 20 other ways to get to be Herbie Hancock, you don't have to do it that way. That one way happens to be more cut and dry, neat on paper. We can take notes on it we can say "okay I'm gonna put this scale here, that scale there . . ."

I think there's also certain mindsets and expectations that some of the faculty more so than others reinforce and suggest in ways of playing. For instance, if you're taking a solo you need to be aware of the melody and playing with the melody and basing your solo off how the melody sounds in your head. If it's Cole Porter "I Love You", the one A section ends with

⁷ The "beat scene" alluded to be Nord refers to a style of electronic music originating in the late 2000s and early 2010s which merges the rhythms of hip-hop beats with the production techniques of electronic music producers.

the melody on the 6, that should be reflected in your solo. Whereas you don't always have to do that as a professional musician. You can play the rhythm of the melodies rather than get the sheer notes of the melody. If you're playing your solo, I feel like at Temple there's an awful lot of emphasis on playing lines. Lines that are based on scales. And you know what, you don't have to play lines. Fuck playing lines! You know what I'm saying? I can think of great solos where the people don't do that (pers. comm., 12/20/13).

Fink notes that this way of teaching improvisation stems from its ease of transmission in a classroom setting: "we can take notes on it." Expanding on the preference for "lines" in jazz solos (that is, well developed melodic sequences closely related to the underlying harmony, stemming from the bebop tradition), Fink later notes that he felt that if he were to play "vamps" or to "just comp" rather than "play lines" in a solo, he would have been considered "not soloing" and rebuffed. The codified methods of teaching jazz theory and improvisation favor a certain kind of practice, the outliers of which may not always be well received if they fall too outside the bounds of expectations of "standard" jazz.

This fixating of certain preferences of practice, however, is contradictory to the very ethos of improvisation, noted for its ability to constantly seek out uncharted territory (Peters 2009). As Derek Bailey notes, improvisation is also well regarded for its ephemeral quality, a quality initially sacrificed by the fixed nature of recordings and further impeded by formalized institutional structures (Bailey 1992:35). As innovation is often regarded as lying at the heart of what improvisation is about, a stasis in the broader development of jazz styles can be seen as harmful to the values of improvisation (Bailey 1992:52). As I will later show, my informants have displayed a willingness to seek out unexplored territories in jazz improvisation through their own creative projects. The

stylistic rigidity favored by teachers utilizing a more formulated method, however, leads to frustrations for students who desire to expand their ability to improvise new explorations.

Coyle gives his own on take on the limits of a codified pedagogy of jazz improvisation and composition:

Just by nature, a collegiate academic program is going to have a set of standards and grading and structure. These types of things do limit the room that exists for "encouragement of creativity." As I said before, some professors were able to take the reigns and fit that creative encouragement into their classroom and curriculum but it didn't always happen. I think compositionally there could have been a lot more demanded out of the jazz students. I used to get so frustrated at how much emphasis was put on writing "tunes" that fit into the traditional combo mold because I didn't and still don't have much of a hunger for doing that (e-mail comm., 4/9/14).

After firstly acknowledging the necessity and inherent nature of a focus on "the tradition" in a collegiate setting, Coyle also expresses his frustration with the limits those kinds of necessities pose, wishing there was more will to "extend the tradition," especially through more advanced compositional strategies and creative thinking. In Coyle's experience, the jazz studies curriculum and traditional ensemble "mold" enforced by ensemble classes taken for credit led to a certain kind of compositional approach to be encouraged, one that could be limiting to those wishing to extend the jazz tradition. On the other hand, Nord notes that though Temple had a certain core preference of style, he never felt discouraged from pursuing "weird" sounds a bit more outside the hard bop realm (pers. comm., 12/20/13).

Students also regularly recognize the difficulties and inherent paradoxes involved in attempting to teach in an institution an artistic practice that is highly valued for its

emphasis on the individual creative expression (Peters 2009). Elijah Thomas elaborates on this point:

I think, ultimately (laughs), to teach jazz in an institutional setting is a complete and utter paradox, given the fact that it's a music of individuals, amongst individuals, whose sole attempt often times is to make music that is individual. Now, with that said, it is institutionalized, and we can't really escape that paradox, but still I think there is way that we can teach tradition to students by freely giving students the information but not enforcing that they do it. I think the problem arises when a lot of teachers really try to force the students to play the tradition in order to truly learn it, as opposed to making the information readily available to them and allowing them to take it as they will and incorporate in the way they want to do. Because I don't think it takes very long for any individual to develop their own style and how it is they want to approach their own art, so for an institution to attempt to conform people on the same page, oftentimes with the purposes of them understanding "this is how you play jazz," I think is wrong, basically.

I think particularly in jazz, it's always happening now, and that's just the nature of it. You play it, it happens, it's completely new, it might be some kind of adaptation that's coming forward by the learned vocabulary, but it's always gonna be different. So to try to solidify principles on something that's always changing doesn't really make much sense to me (pers. comm., 12/19/13).

I quote Thomas at length here, because his comments really get to the heart of what Thomas calls the "paradox" of jazz education. Thomas, like most of my informants, displays a keen awareness of these kinds of inherent issues of institutionalization, issues he feels to be irresolvable but at the same time not without room for the creative development of the individual voice. The answer according to Thomas lies not in a further compiling of more harmonic material to be taught, for example, but in a recognition and support of the individual perspective and creative approach. According to Thomas, students should be free to do as they please with the information they are given,

with the instructor existing to supply that information and then mostly stay out of the way in order to let the student's own creative processes take over.

In fact, students regularly cite a responsibility on the part of the student to explore their own creative avenues, with Temple acting as an educational framework and support system but not wholly determinant of the individual musician's creative direction. Even as they identify what they perceive to be shortcomings of Temple's program, or jazz education in general, interview subjects still reify the entrenched "traditions" and the necessity of becoming trained in them before continuing to explore more outward directions in jazz. This groundwork of traditions as cemented by Temple and its instructors is not inherently the problem, according to my informants, as by their nature, jazz musicians should have a strong individual will anyway. David Nord, for instance, recalls jazz's nature as an "individual art form" that may be threatened by the institution's need to teach a common underlying structure, but he still values the "foundations" of jazz music and their importance (pers. comm., 12/20/13). Like Thomas, Nord notes that the very nature of institutionalization is "tricky," with no easy fix. But also like Thomas, Nord stresses the individuality of jazz as an art form, with homogenization acting as a threat to the element of individuality so highly valued. Though Thomas in his comments cautions against overly involved instruction and a too tightly defined genre, he still places value in pedagogy. In Thomas's opinion, then, the university should play a crucial role, but must be careful to not become too dogmatic in order to not restrict the creativity of the individual student voice.

Eli Sklarsky believes the onus to ultimately be on the student to find his or her own voice:

I think the main issue and I think the reason it's such a problem is the time restriction, you're there for four years to study a music that's been around for how long? How are you going to cover everything? The university decides what are going to be the most important things, the best things for their students to get out of, and they choose to do that. Whether those be the right things or not, that's for them to say, but it's obviously never gonna catch everything. And I think the whole point of it at the end of the day is to make a musician that's going to go out and find those other things themselves (pers. comm., 12/19/13).

In our conversation, Sklarsky continually referred back to the fact that Temple's jazz studies program, as with most undergraduate degree programs, consists of only four years of study, making it all the more understandable that certain things would be left out of study. In general, students readily admitted and acknowledged the limitations of a four-year jazz conservatory program, but still professed overwhelmingly positive experiences. The shortcomings of Temple's jazz studies program were rarely attributed to any particular faculty members or ideological fault, but accepted as a reality of institutionalization in a collegiate setting. This acceptance of shortcomings was eased by the fact that most students reported far more positive experiences than negative, but also by interviewees' privileging of the agency of the individual musician. As each student is expected to find their own way, the ideal role of jazz education programs would be to help the student forge their own path, not to attempt to teach everything, nor to present the perfect curriculum, as student interests will inevitably vary. Students most often expressed displeasure when they were in fact forced to fit a certain mold of compositional standards or improvisatory approach and generally remained more understanding that

certain stylistic traditions were not as well covered so long as they were at least made reference to. In Thomas's words:

They can't tell their students "listen you guys have to just decide on something and stick with it," because that's not teaching jazz music. But they also can't neglect to teach them the tradition either, so they know what it is they want to do for themselves. No institution has been able to get that middle ground. And I think it's impossible, it's never gonna happen really.

MN: As you said, it's a paradox.

Yeah, it's a paradox. How it is that we combine individualism with tradition into this perfect meld? We can't do it, so Temple, in at least my experience, actually overall did do a good job of that

Ultimately, I suppose my final point is that it's not just making it appeal to the public so you can sell your music, so you can get well known to advance yourself; it's so people can actually listen to your music and enjoy it. I want to get my own stuff out there because I think it's stuff that's really good. I enjoy playing it, and I think whoever's listening to it will enjoy it too. And I think that's the point; music is a communal thing, always has been and always will be, and we limit ourselves to it being a communal thing by just sacrificing the opinions of others for our own integrity, so to speak. And again that's something no institution can really remedy, that's something an individual has to come to themselves (pers. comm., 12/19/13).

Thomas touches not only on the inherent problems of teaching individualism within an institutional setting, but on the challenge of taking that individuality and fostering a more communal music that could potentially attract a wider audience. Though various interview subjects gave their thoughts on possible strategies of making jazz music more newly relevant or "popular" with a broader segment of the population, few referenced the aspect of communality that Thomas alludes to here, an element so crucial to jazz's social history and to which much scholarship has been devoted (Fischlin & Heble 2004, Rustin & Tucker 2008). Though jazz is often portrayed as a history of great

individual (usually male) figures, its real social potential has resulted from the element of community, collaboration, and common understanding necessary to create successfully improvised ensemble music often containing highly resistive expressions (Fischlin, Heble & Lipsitz 2013). Where Daniel Fischlin, Ajay Heble, and George Lipsitz refer to improvisation's inherent allowance for variance as lending it an ability to challenge civic discourse (2013:12), the practice of improvisation as discussed in the context of university jazz institutions is far removed from this potential, as it now prioritizes the musical over the social. As contemporary jazz moves towards a greater emphasis of the individual creative will over a communal connection, it risks losing a vital aspect of its power to effect change. In one sense, student and alumni musicians display a keen sense of agency allowing them to forge their own creative vision and artistic path, resisting notions that the institutional framework in which they were trained would lead to passive reception of homogenized sounds and ideas – a sampling of the various musical projects undertaken by Temple graduates will attest to that. On the other, however, individualization in this sense takes place largely in the realm of musical aesthetics, with much less regard for the historical context of communal expression attached to transformative jazz movements. Though students of jazz are largely successful at emulating the improvisatory skills utilized in this movements, accompanying issues of cultural history and racial identity are largely backgrounded in favor of these strategies of harmonic exploration and instrumental technique, a crucial effect of university institutionalization to which I will later turn.

Economic Realities

Beyond their musical characterizations of Temple's jazz curriculum, most students acknowledge the economic reality wherein university education for jazz musicians now takes place. Many students cite the affordable tuition of the public Temple University as a crucial factor in their initial decision to attend Temple's jazz studies program. In assessing whether their time spent at Temple was worthwhile, students frequently turn to concerns of student loan debt, with some admitting that they would not have felt the tuition to be worth the jazz education had their parents not covered much of their costs. Even as students praised the opportunities of networking afforded by a jazz education at Temple, many have also come to grips with the expensive reality that is attending college for music, even at a relatively affordable state school. Fink expresses his concern with student loan debt:

If I had to do it over again I don't think I would have bothered to finish school. I think I may have done a year, maybe two years, because I feel like with that kind of time frame that's enough time to know what you have to do and to more importantly meet a bunch of musicians.

MN: Okay, so you view that as more crucial, networking.

So people would know you, they would know you're not a total jackass on your instrument, and call you for gigs.

MN: So what would you have done if you switched out? Would you switch to a different major?

Just stopped. Just stopped and studied privately with Tom [Lawton] or something like that.

MN: So you think that'd be more worth it economically?

Yea, I mean what did the last two years at Temple cost me? Say \$20,000? How many lessons can you get with Tom Lawton for \$20,000? I can get a lot of lessons with Tom! (pers. comm., 12/20/13).

Fink views the networking benefits of enrolling in a jazz studies program to be crucial but also seeks to balance the amount of formal and private study that would be most financially effective. Though Fink was more optimistic than most of my informants in the potential to acquire privately the sorts of jazz knowledge learned at Temple, his observation is an important one. Temple's opportunities for networking perhaps cannot be easily replaced without attending school for at least a year or two, but the price of that networking opportunity relative to the low earning potential of the average jazz musician is incredibly high. With the combination of the price to attend school for jazz and the near-necessity of that education in order to become a working jazz musician, it is clear why jazz has largely become a middle to upper-class music. Those that can afford to major in jazz would be more likely to come from more privileged backgrounds, and as class and race are inextricably bound in American society, it is no wonder that the demographic for jazz musicians has increasingly skewed White. Even if a school such as Temple has greater African American presence than in the population at large, and a White representation merely consistent with college enrollment statistics, this is still a drastic demographic shift for a musical style that has historically been predominantly Black. Though this "whitening" of jazz had been underway long before the proliferation of university jazz departments, the university nonetheless has helped to perpetuate this change, enacting a sort of gentrification of a minority music.

Furthermore, schools such as Temple University create a situation where the number of people willing to pay to become highly trained in jazz largely outnumber the amount of people willing to pay to listen to jazz. There exists a very significant supply and demand problem in Philadelphia and in the jazz community at large, where more and more accomplished musicians are produced by schools such as Temple for fewer and fewer well-paying gigs. As there are more jazz musicians, many of them young, earnest, and willing to play for lower pay, the monetary value of their services declines. College students become a sort of cheap labor for jazz clubs willing to take advantage of such abundant supply of talented musicians. For example, Fink expressed his fear that he may have unknowingly priced out a veteran musician (and Temple instructor) out of his steady gig by being willing to accept less pay from the employing venue: “I’m not trying to jack his gig, but if it’s like two or three people from undercutting, am I really undercutting?” (pers. comm., 12/20/13).

Tom Moon also addresses the issue of supply and demand as propagated by jazz schools such as Temple:

It’s not sustainable at least in any way where the music that we call jazz is considered. I’d be really curious to get some numbers on how many people are graduating each year with degrees that have the word “jazz” in them and what happens to those people five years out. Because as good as the schools can be at equipping their population for work—it gets better and better, they send people out who are more skilled—there are still a very limited number of gigs. And the sort of hands on deck number vs. the number of actual work opportunities, it’s out of control. It was out of control five years ago, it’s probably worse now than five years ago, and as you see the number of graduates increase it’s gonna get worse and worse. And you know, the sort of dirty little secret, the thing that’s not discussed is that these schools are turning out really good people, people who are really skilled, who don’t have work opportunities in their field. Ultimately, even the best of the best will find a mix of work that involves teaching,

that involves doing some kind of work outside of music entirely, or that involves retail in some cases, journalism, music therapy, there are a lot of ways to be useful as a musician but this notion that you're gonna get a jazz degree and go out and play jazz 5 nights a week isn't it (pers. comm. 12/19/13).

Moon also sees the current state of jazz as incubating an uneven relationship between performers and their audience:

So are we cultivating a bunch of doers and no audience? And really that's an important question too. I'm not trying to say the people that are running these programs are under obligations to tamp down the hopes and dreams and expectations of their students. I think that those students even if they end up working in some other field, will end up being good listeners for their lifetime, and maybe the future of that listening that you're talking about is that population. But I definitely feel that there is a degree of self-interest on the part of the people who are teaching jazz that says, "don't discourage them too much because that's your livelihood."

MN: "We want more students, not less."

The push from the top down at all of these universities is "get more. Build the program, grow this." When in fact maybe the real smart thing, and the thing to really focus on both for the health of the art and for the well being of the student population, is a real cold shower that says, "don't do this, consider really what this is like" (pers. comm. 12/19/13).

Moon echoes Marquis estimate that only 10% of those going to school for jazz would end up making a career out of it (Marquis 1998:122), though what constitutes a "career in music" is obviously up for debate. Moon's point on jazz majors becoming the new listening audience also resembles Henry Kingsbury's argument that graduates of conservatory programs were more likely to become the new more "sophisticated consumers" of art music than actual performers (Kingsbury 1988:19). Kingsbury also notes that the conservatory is not under any sort of regulation that limits the amount of musicians it produces, so the most likely involvement of graduates years after leaving the

conservatory is as devoted followers, not as economically viable musicians. The sort of free market ethos of conservatory programs leads to far more aspiring musicians than there are steady gigs, though it should also be noted that Temple's jazz program admission rate as of May of 2014 is a competitive 36%,⁸ so there is some degree of restraint being employed by this particular jazz studies program. On the whole, however, it is very much in the interest of the university system to accept more students willing to pay tuition than it is to shrink the student body, despite the bleak economic nature of the contemporary jazz scene. After drawing a comparison to the regulation employed by medical schools, Eli Sklarsky notes the problem of this free market:

Yeah, there's no curriculum in New York City that says, "well, New York City needs 250 drummers, so we're letting in this many people, San Diego needs this many people so we're letting in this many people to this program." There's no way of actually knowing and at the end of the day the university is also a money making machine, and if people are interested in studying it, regardless of whether they can make a career out of it or not, they're gonna do it (pers. comm., 12/19/13).

Sklarsky's comments further illustrate the upper-middle class to higher class associations that jazz now carries; people will pay a lot of money to learn jazz, even though there is not usually much money to be made in performing it. So long there is a body of potential students willing to pay inflated tuition fees to learn the art form, the universities and music venues have little incentive to change their business model. As the cost of university education continues to increase, the performing demographic of jazz

⁸ This figure per James Short, the director of admissions at the Boyer College Music of Dance. According to Short, out of 1052 auditions for the jazz program in the last ten years, 382 were admitted (e-mail comm., 5/20/14).

music will increasingly reflect the segment of the population that is able to afford not only higher education, but higher education in the arts specifically.

These seemingly dire economic straits that jazz now finds itself can be attributed to both the gradual decline of jazz popularity in American culture and the general neoliberal model of the university in the twenty-first century, indicating that despite its presentation as autonomous musical art, jazz is not immune to extramusical realities. These processes continue long-standing demographic shifts in jazz, further supported by the models of decontextualization and deracination jazz university programs have promoted in order to legitimize the now widespread conservatory study of jazz. It is to this important aspect of jazz university institutionalization that I now turn.

Threats of Deracination of Jazz

Most of my discussions with my interview subjects centered around musical concepts, pedagogical challenges, performance experiences, and overall philosophy on jazz as a musical art form. Those I interviewed were generally less likely to veer into discussion of jazz as a social and cultural history than they were to express what aspects of music theory they found most useful in their time at Temple. Part of this tendency resulted from my own initial reluctance to press on issues of race, but when asking such open-ended questions as “what do you wish you had been exposed to more at Temple?” rarely did I receive any answers relating to jazz history. The fact that discussions about jazz music were not usually accompanied by any kind of social and cultural context suggests that the music has taken on a more autonomous quality similar to that of

Western art music, an unsurprising result of the classicization of jazz in a university conservatory setting.

When asked directly to assess jazz's current relationship with its African American roots, students often acknowledged that said roots existed and were in some sense important, but shied away from arguing for any necessity of a continuing obligation to a Black cultural heritage, with one informant even passing over the question entirely. Students often favored universalist sentiments regarding jazz, preferring to think in terms of broad musical aesthetics rather than of specific cultural connections. Furthermore, this reaction was consistent for students of both African American and White American descent that I interviewed, indicating the pervasiveness of contemporary post-racial modes of thinking. Chris Stevens gives his take:

I don't think jazz is tangible enough to be obligated to anyone, but I think that it's a part of a very rich history and should be acknowledged and appreciated by all. Even for those who don't like "jazz" per se, the music they love is probably filled with it. Motown musicians were jazz musicians. Many gospel musicians are jazz musicians. The same goes for pop music. On the flip side, a lot of the music is also highly influenced by classical music. At the end of the day, I think it's about where you're from and how society portrays music. It's the immersion factor. We all have the same notes to pick from, right? So the music is the constant (e-mail comm., 4/19/14).

While Stevens insightfully emphasizes the slipperiness of "jazz" as a defining category, his statement also drifts into universalist sentiments that have often been problematic when employed against Black jazz musicians. Stevens also speaks from the standpoint of "the notes" rather than from any cultural perspective, and though his point on the commonalities between musical genres is well taken and reflective of jazz's historical influence on American popular music, it also demonstrates a common underlying theme

of universality that is reoccurring amongst the conservatory trained jazz musicians I have interviewed.

Chris Coyle gives his perspective on the challenges of establishing in a university institution an African American cultural identity for jazz, noting that it is likely in the university's best interest to attract students that they downplay cultural associations:

As far as the African American stake in jazz, I think that it is extremely important to preserve the origin of the music and the historical context. However, when it comes to university programs it becomes a much more complicated topic. How can you make some sort of cultural initiative part of what a college offers to paying students, many of whom are seeking musical knowledge and not a social agenda? Of course the history and the cultural significance need to be focused on, but you shouldn't spend time telling students "what direction" the music needs to head in or how it needs to be digested culturally (e-mail comm., 4/9/14).

Ryan McNeely answers along the same lines:

Jazz is mostly art and history at this point. There are adventurous groups out there creating new types of jazz but as I've seen it's mostly other musicians listening to these groups. I do not foresee jazz reentering the mainstream. I think it has and will continue to move in the direction of classical music: a respected tradition enjoyed by a niche audience. Temple, and music schools in general, do seem to be moving the jazz community in an increasingly White direction. I think this is a trend of increased institutionalization in lieu of the historically Black and informally transferred lineage of jazz. That being said I do not believe jazz musicians have any obligation to kowtow to the African American roots of jazz. A descendant of an early Black jazz musician living today has no ownership of their ancestor's accomplishments. Though to be fair, I'm a honky (e-mail comm., 4/14/14).

Both Coyle and McNeely readily acknowledge jazz's African American heritage and the university's role in downplaying that cultural particularity in the name of a conservatory pedagogy with broader appeal. Both stop, however, at affirming whether the university and the jazz community in general hold a deeper responsibility to continue to sustain

those cultural connections. Here the question of jazz's racial identity becomes tied with questions of jazz's past, present, and future. If jazz's past is heavily tied to the African American experience, as numerous works have illustrated (Baraka 1963, Fischlin, Heble & Lipsitz 2013, Monson 2007), its present and future seem to lie in the hands of the university and its jazz conservatory programs. As McNeely notes, jazz's audience in present times comes to resemble the same specialized but limited segments of the population as that of Western art music, both of which would be more likely to consider musical performances as autonomously created by the performers and composers responsible than arising out of any particular cultural experience of community. In speaking of where jazz might move in the future, Coyle in particular is reluctant to determine where jazz "should" go, again reflecting jazz musicians' preference for the creative agency of the individual musician. My interview subjects were most likely to become frustrated with their instruction when it was over-determined and left less room for the individual's own input on the musical direction they would take. The cultural direction of jazz then seems to adhere to the same desires, with students preferring a similar kind of open-ended potential for growth, resulting in a potentially dangerous universalism that by its nature necessitates the de-emphasis of African American cultural context.

Freedlander further demonstrates a concern that ties jazz's creative future with an ideal of fewer limitations, be they musical or cultural:

As far as obligation to African American roots, I believe it's important to respect the roots and traditions of a genre of music, but that no one should ever limit what they do musically just because of what someone else has done before them. I remember reading a story Miles Davis told in his

autobiography where his earliest memory was touching a blue flame on a hot stove, and feeling the rush and excitement of the heat. He said that he always believed his personal life philosophy came from that experience, that life had to always move forward, away from the heat of that flame. Ever since I read that, I've always agreed with him. If a musician wants to only play 1920's style jazz, that's fine, but he or she should never put down another person for wanting to move the music forward. I believe that's what happened to classical music in a way; the genre as a whole took its focus off of new composers and creativity and stuck to the classics, and it's very clear that's it's dying off. In order for a genre of music to survive, it has to evolve (e-mail comm., 5/1/14).

Freedlander's sentiment is common, privileging a healthy innovation for jazz over an orthodoxy that might restrict creative growth. While few students would seem to deny the importance of knowledge of jazz's Black cultural roots, few also express much concern of the music's continuing evolution past these roots, especially for those students who place more value on the music's continually innovative quality. As jazz has evolved in the latter half of the 20th century to the point of being suitable for university conservatory settings, it has simultaneously sought to both reify and canonize its Black cultural roots but also to remove any overt racial connotations. What has been called the "tradition" in my interviews with informants refers to a specifically African American bebop and hard bop tradition, the Afrological perspective rarely referred to on such racial terms. "The tradition," then, refers to a Black musical past not explicitly conceived as such, whereas "the future" holds possibilities of participation from musicians from any ethnicity or nationality and with it, a more creatively expansive potential.

It is important to situate Temple's jazz studies program in the long history of colorblind discourses in jazz in order to convey what makes students' universalist sentiments so uncomfortable. Though jazz is well regarded by scholars as a fully African

American musical achievement in origin and throughout its century long history, discourses around jazz have also regularly worked to erase original Black contribution by emphasizing the music's "democratic" or "universal" nature. Likewise, though jazz has inextricably been linked to civil rights and Black nationalist movements in many eras of its history, Black jazz musicians that have taken an emphatically Black nationalist stance have often been roundly criticized, interrogated, and even ostracized by White jazz critics who preferred to think of jazz in universal, musically autonomous terms (Jones 1964, Kofsky 1998, Heble 2000, Monson 2007, Fischlin, Heble and Lipsitz 2013). As Frank Kofsky notes, the jazz critic's close relationship with the also largely White-controlled music industry gave them extra incentive to obscure the social relations and political undertones of the music (Kofsky 1998:30). Furthermore, though Black jazz musicians themselves may have had very strong political leanings, the music industry forced them to either downplay these associations themselves or to transmit such messages in more covert manners in order that their music not suffer critical backlash and subsequent failure in the marketplace. That is not to say that there were not genuine expressions of universalism amongst jazz musicians in the civil rights era and beyond, but this does indicate that those sentiments endured for a reason, in that they were more favorably received in a White controlled music industry. Discourses of universalism as employed by politically active Black musicians, however, differ in nature than those employed by music industry figures and critics. The former often aligned itself with the Black nationalist sentiments of the 1960s, particularly the ideologies of the Nation of Islam, which sought to align the world's subordinate peoples—be they from Africa, Asia, or

North America—in order to form a global non-White majority to combat colonialism and oppression (Monson 2007:133, Fischlin, Heble & Lipsitz 2013:149). The use of universalist and multiculturalist discourses for jazz by oppressing powers, however, often had a very negative effect that served to reinforce White hegemony, ranging from the White critic lambasting of artists expressing Black nationalist sentiments to the United States State Department tours that promoted democracy abroad with jazz music while the U.S. ignored its own civil rights at home (Monson 2007, Roberts 1999, Myers 2012).

Indeed, numerous critics have noted the particular dangers of universalizing and democratizing representations of jazz (Monson 1996, Kofsky 1998, Friedwald et al. 2002, Monson 2007, Kelley 2012). Though various scholars differ in determining just how ethnically essentialist jazz music should be regarded, or what qualities determine “blackness” in jazz, there is little debate about the African American cultural roots of the music. Nonetheless, these connections have often been downplayed in order to argue for greater inclusion and to acquire greater institutional support. In Monson’s words, “to erase that aesthetic history in the name of universalism, many contend, is a whitewash that allows white people to appropriate black cultural forms with impunity” (Monson 2007:70). She continues:

Yet, as in all things pertaining to race in the United States, the idea of the modern artist was a double-edged sword. If it enabled African American musicians to partially break out of a race-based, second-class citizenship by appealing to merit and genius, it also provided a rhetoric through which white musicians could insist that the music be understood as colorblind and dismiss those who emphasized its black heritage as reverse racists. This basic discursive framework has shaped the way in which debates over race and jazz have been argued about since the mid-twentieth century (2007:70).

The placement of jazz in a conservatory thus often sees things like “artistic merit” and “individual skill” posited as supposedly autonomous qualities that can be evaluated on their own terms—obviously hardly the case. As Georgina Born notes in her ethnography of the avant-garde composer’s society IRCAM, even the supposedly sterile and detached environment of the musical conservatory is a force of cultural production (Born 1995:23), though the musical material taught in these institutions is presented as not needing any accompanying cultural associations. This decontextualizing process of institutionalization becomes even more troubling when applied to the music of a subaltern group, in this case African American jazz. Though Black cultural and musical aesthetics have long been held up as the ideal for musicians of any color to strive for in producing “good” jazz (Monson 1995, Kofsky 1998, Lewis 2004a), these aesthetics are also often detached from their cultural and social context, allowing for advocates of colorblind ideologies of jazz to argue that so long as these aesthetic standards are met, skin color does not matter. Furthermore, these aesthetic standards were forged out of a particularly problematic conception of a fetishized rebellious and primitivist male blackness arising in the bebop era, with these standards (the virtuosic flight of the individual soloist, raw expressionism, instinct over intellect, etc.) largely persisting today (Monson 1995).

Eventually, the removal of relevant context from these aesthetics would progress to the point to where these aesthetics could be recalled without any specific reference to blackness, to where these qualities could be held as truly autonomous and colorblind, achievable by any musician willing to commit the required time in the practice room.

This deracination process benefits the university conservatory, which seeks greater inclusion, but often occurs at the expense of important social and cultural context. In this sense, in addition to their emulation of the Western classical conservatory model, university jazz programs closely follow the canon established in the 1980s by controversial trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and the critics Stanley Crouch and Albert Murray.

Much has been written of the problems inherent in the attempts of Marsalis, Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC), and Ken Burns to canonize jazz (Monson 1996, Heble 2000, Peters 2009, Rustin & Tucker 2008, McMullen 2008, Gioia 2011, Porter 2012, Washburne 2012). Loren Kajikawa writes that even as Marsalis and Crouch worked to present a vision of jazz rooted in African American cultural expressions that required hard work to master, Marsalis's presenting of jazz as "America's classical music" in fact "parallels the rhetoric of color blindness espoused by certain politicians and their allies in the 1980s" (Kajikawa 2012:212). Where jazz discourses had previously celebrated color blindness as a way to justify White participation, or to promote democracy abroad in Cold War diplomacy programs, neo-traditionalist models of jazz in the 1980s adhered to contemporary ideologies of multiculturalism largely in order to establish a classical legitimacy for jazz, and thus to receive institutional funding (Heble 2000:6).

While Marsalis, Crouch, and Murray did attempt, and in a sense, succeed at validating the African American cultural achievement of jazz via an establishment of canonic repertory (what my informants mean when they refer to "the tradition"), they did so in manner that necessitated the de-emphasizing of jazz's Black particularity and the re-

emphasizing of long entrenched notions that jazz could be “America’s classical music.” To do so required a focus on the apparently autonomous artistic merits of the music and a subsequent erasure of jazz’s long history of civil rights engagement, as evidenced by the near total exclusion of free jazz from JALC’s programming. Removing jazz from its cultural and social context allowed it to be placed and consumed safely in the concert hall, where it could then be given ample corporate sponsorship (Gabbard 1995:2, Fischlin, Heble & Lipsitz 2013:122). Marsalis and his cohorts’ canonizing efforts have also worked to further present jazz as a fully masculine realm, with JALC continually criticized for its lack of female representation and also with university jazz programs frequently skewing overwhelmingly male (McMullen 2008).

Nonetheless, JALC’s model and set of preferences for jazz continues to cast a looming influence on the ways university jazz programs are run and aestheticized. Where Marsalis has been criticized for following a concert hall model for legitimizing certain “safe” styles of acoustic jazz, which acts to elevate jazz by appealing to European models of musical greatness and artistic autonomy, university jazz programs likewise follow a similar model of legitimization of a formerly vernacular music. These processes of legitimization and transformation in the name of institutionalization can be read as a “whitening” of a historically Black music, a facet my informants such as McNeely have recognized. The university jazz studies program’s codifying process can be aptly summarized by looking at the proliferation of *The Real Book*. Developed at Berklee College of Music in the 1970s as a formalization of prior versions of jazz “fake books,” *The Real Book* helped fix a canon of jazz repertoire standards, while also giving further

credence to the emphasis of harmony, melody, and form over other elements that could not by the nature of Western staff notation be conveyed in a lead sheet (interactivity amongst ensemble players, timbre, groove, etc.) (Kernfeld 2006). While a useful pedagogical tool, *The Real Book* nonetheless reflects the growing emphasis on jazz practice as a collection of melodies, chord progressions, and tunes to learn, rather than as a musical culture in which to participate.

It appears, then, that by following both a classical conservatory model of music pedagogy and a late twentieth, early twenty-first century national ideology of multiculturalism, university jazz programs such as Temple tend to deracinate jazz in order to make it accessible to anyone of any race, creed, or gender. This is achieved through an emphasis of the supposedly colorblind musical elements of the music, those of harmony, melody, and democratic group improvisation, over Black cultural roots and historical connections. Though there are many great academics working in jazz, often writing on these very issues of race and cultural identity, university jazz conservatory programs such as Temple typically only hire performers, composers, and arrangers as their faculty, as the departmental focus is usually entirely on jazz music, not jazz history. Courses on jazz history in these programs are likewise often taught by jazz performers, as is the case at Temple, not scholars in the field of jazz history, and tend to follow the simplified “great men” model of jazz history, as best evidenced by Ken Burns’ widely criticized *Jazz* series (McMullen 2008:141).

David Nord summarizes this emphasis of the musical item over musical context as he perceived it at Temple:

Well that's another thing they could have done better in the jazz education program, which is more cultural context. You know, they teach you all about the music but they don't teach you about where the music comes from or why or who was doing it.

Or what social context.

Yeah, they'll kind of be like, "oh by the way, this John Coltrane tune 'Alabama' is about when some Klansman burnt down a Black church, but let's transcribe it!" (pers. comm., 12/20/13).

Nord cites a lack of grounding in historical context as a shortcoming of Temple's jazz instruction. Where students could take any number of courses in specialized topics in Western music history taught by tenured and adjunct musicologists (jazz majors were in fact required to take two semesters of Western music history), the jazz history component consisted of only one single semester course taught by an instrumental instructor, not a specialist in the area of jazz history. While jazz departments mold themselves on a Western conservatory model, they would do well to also follow the lead of classical departments that have expanded beyond a focus on performance and arranging to include a breadth of history classes as well. The absence of trained scholars in the field of jazz history at conservatory programs such as Temple suggests the chasm between performers and academics noted by Sherrie Tucker (Tucker 2012:270).

These sentiments that treat jazz as autonomous music without accompanying cultural context perhaps result from this lack of historical background for the music that students train so hard to be able to play. That is not to say that the sentiments of my informants are anything but well intentioned, as they certainly are consistent with a contemporary feel-good ideology of multiculturalism, but the fact that students so readily regard jazz as abstract creative material as opposed to culturally defined music speaks to

the colorblind institutional setting in which jazz music is now primarily disseminated. The situation is complicated by the fact that many African American jazz musicians historically have expressed sentiments of universality, and that these sentiments often did accomplish the goal of achieving a great societal standing for Black music. Though as Ingrid Monson notes, the effects of these sentiments differ greatly depending on who employs them:

Since whiteness tends to be a sign of inauthenticity within the world of jazz, the appeals of white musicians to universalistic rhetoric can be perceived as power plays rather than genuine expressions of universal brotherhood. If jazz is one of the few cultural activities in which being African American is evaluated as “better” or more “authentic” than being non-African American, a white musician’s appeal to a colorblind rhetoric might cloak a move to minimize the black cultural advantage by “lowering” an assertive African American musician from his or her pedestal to a more “equal” playing field (1996:203).

Though I would contend that the colorblind sentiments expressed in the university conservatory setting arise more out of a contemporary post-racial trend of thinking than any conscious power play on the part of students, Monson’s words reveal why this rhetoric is so uncomfortable and could result in a lack of informed awareness of the music’s African American cultural history. Nord cites a noted example of this unawareness:

I don’t know, it’s largely ignored that this Black American music, this “BAM” (laughs) . . . and then when you had that BAM thing.

MN: Everybody got upset.

Every Temple student was up in arms about it. Because no one ever told them, wait yes it is Black American Music . . . We are appropriating. And it’s okay to do that, if you choose to respect everything about it and take the time to know why it exists, then yeah, there’s no reason a White

person shouldn't be able to play jazz. But if you're not really respecting the roots of it, the Black American roots, then fuck you (laughs) (pers. comm., 12/20/13).

Nord here references an occurrence in late 2011 when trumpeter Nicolas Payton ignited a firestorm of controversy in a blog post insisting that his music be referred to as "Black American Music," rather than "jazz" (Payton 2011). The discourse amongst jazz musicians, fans, and writers surrounding this event showed that while most acknowledged the African American roots of the music, many were still not comfortable defining the genre along such racial lines, preferring instead to think of jazz's present and future as colorblind (Jarenwattananon 2011, Colligan 2011, Carey 2011, Chinen 2012, Thomas 2012). Again, debates about jazz's ethnic particularity were tied with questions about the music's future, which is idealized as more all-encompassing. Kelvin Grant, himself an African American male, rejected the "BAM" proposal when answering a question about the obligation of jazz to its African American roots:

Firstly, I don't believe in this whole BAM movement. The accusation that White people have no place playing jazz is ridiculous. Some greats were White, Bill Evans anyone? Yes, jazz was started by African Americans, but that doesn't mean that only people of that race have any claim to the music. Let's remember that jazz is half European classical music, and half African music; jazz is half White to begin with! The only obligation that jazz has to its African American roots is to continually incorporate the African components such as rhythms and call-and-response motifs that began in the music (e-mail comm., 5/26/14).

Grant went on to cite various recent jazz artists that have worked to transcend the genre, once again illustrating a link between jazz's hope for infinitive creative potential and an absence of labels, be they musical or racial designations.

While ideologies of inclusion have their merits, and while my informants certainly do not have the institutional authority nor the intention to suppress non-

universalist expressions as did leagues of jazz writers in the past, these sentiments nonetheless confirm a widely held assumption of jazz's recent move to the realm of autonomous art music. In becoming re-classified as high art in order to be placed in the conservatory, jazz needed to lose its ethnic particularity and accompanying cultural context, so that theories of harmony and chord-scale relationships could be given their full attention. This effect of decontextualization could be remedied with a greater incorporation of jazz history into the curriculum of jazz conservatory programs, which when combined with the creative agency displayed by university jazz musicians could create a more potent and culturally informed future for jazz.

A Hope for Jazz's Creative Potential

While they may not argue for a specific reclaiming of jazz's cultural past, many of my informants recognize a need for some kind of cultural meaning to be attached to the music as a way to inch a bit back toward the realm of the popular. Nord answers a question of whether he felt jazz could still be viable:

Yes, if it's broadened to a modern context. Honestly like, BADBADNOTGOOD,⁹ they suck as players, but they're popular because they bring jazz into a modern context. So like the cats back in the 60s were playing standards that were the pop tunes of the day, so why not play pop tunes of the day today? So groups like The Bad Plus, who are very popular and very good, so people think "oh they play Nirvana, they're just a gimmick," no, that's just them playing the pop tunes of today, same thing guys were doing back then. And a guy like Robert Glasper who's had a lot of success because he brings jazz into a modern context. And it's cool to

⁹ Nord refers to a trio of young Canadian musicians and drop-outs of the jazz program at Humber College in Toronto whose repertoire often includes covers of such contemporary popular artists as Kanye West, Odd Future, and James Blake. Though the group has received near universal scorn by jazz critics for their apparent lack of technique, musicianship, and arrogance, often attacked as not being "jazz" at all, they have been far more favorably received in the "Indie" music community than any "jazz" group in recent years.

still listen to the old stuff and revere it and study but I think it's not culturally significant today. And if I'm going out to hear music, I don't want to hear that. I want to hear something new, something relevant to today's culture (pers. comm., 12/20/13).

Arguments about where jazz can go to become popular again often suggest moving past the word "jazz" itself, much as Nicolas Payton and others have chosen to do.

Thomas elaborates:

Just to call it "jazz," just to be "jazz," that's not always gonna go well over with people, well it's jazz music I don't wanna hear that crap I wanna be able to actually dance and tap my foot. And also because we have to name jazz, the other thing is we have an unfathomable amount of connotations that are attached to that music, just socially, economically, emotionally, there's so much that goes into the history, that people will always look on it with somewhat of a negative view before they actually give it a chance. There's always gonna be some sort of highly esteemed prejudice held for jazz.

. . . So, I suppose to make the main long story a bit shorter, I don't think "jazz" really has to be employed anymore to describe the music, because no one can really say what it is anymore. And if you want to call it something that you have known it to be, you're probably going to be mistaken, because it's changed, for everyone (pers. comm., 12/19/13).

It is understandable that some musicians would feel limited back by the term "jazz," as there is a long history of segregationist employments of the term by music industry types (Fischlin & Heble 2004, Ake, Garrett & Goldmark 2012, Fischlin, Heble and Lipsitz 2013). The "jazz" label carries with it certain connotations, the connotation today being that jazz is a dead, irrelevant genre. These connotations are what Payton sought to defeat when he advocated for the "BAM" moniker, while also reasserting the music's Black cultural origins. My informants, however, speak on broader terms, again mostly referring to the music itself. Coyle gives his thoughts on how one might creatively apply elements of jazz as learned in the university to non-jazz contexts:

I think that in some ways jazz or “improvised music” is more important than ever. Today’s culture seems to demand music and art that is quick, minimal, or overt. Jazz has a way of showcasing subtlety, humor, and texture, which are characteristics that are hard to come by in a lot of modern music. Many listeners don’t have the time or focus to tap into those things so jazz still remains this “other” thing, sort of an acquired taste. Sometimes I think that jazz musicians are trying too hard to maintain the whole framework of the music when they could be taking more raw elements (for example the humor and subtlety, or ideas like thru-composition, instrumental conversation, experimenting with pocket, etc.) and applying them to unique situations (e-mail comm., 4/9/14).

Coyle cites a current need for improvised music as resulting from what is often viewed as a deficiency of attention span in contemporary American society and listening audience. In addition to many of the musicians I talked to, Coyle views jazz as offering rich potential to enhance modern popular music, even if it does not occur in what one might label “jazz.” A renewed relationship with popular music would not only keep jazz relevant, but provide some missing ingredient that popular music is perceived to be lacking. In his own work with the group Son Step, an Indie rock band co-founded with fellow Temple graduates Jon Coyle, Patrick Lamborn, and Matt Scarano,¹⁰ Coyle applies this philosophy to interesting effect. In their studio performance of “Take the Time,”¹¹ for example, the band displays those “characteristics” of jazz learned in their time at Temple, revealing a great sensitivity to groove, tight interlocking amongst instruments, finely tuned harmonies, and attention to dynamic range. Though their songs may not be accompanied by enough “ii-Vs” and instrumental solos to be labeled “jazz” per say, Son Step nonetheless suggests one possible musical application of a university jazz education.

¹⁰ I use the term “Indie” very loosely here as a broad categorization, which Coyle agreed to be most appropriate in describing the band, even if lacking in much definition as a genre designator.

¹¹ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkyyOi8icJO> (accessed 6/10/14).

Conclusion

In total, the various musical projects of my informants suggest that the musical careers of students after graduation is far more diverse than a focus on the institutional emphasis of “the tradition” may immediately suggest. Though most of my informants regularly play standard acoustic and hard bop-rooted gigs, Fink also works as a church organist while occasionally performing in a Dixieland group; Stevens leads his R&B, jazz-funk fusion band Vertical Current; Sklarsky regularly performs in a Brazilian bossa nova-jazz hybrid group; McNeely plays in settings ranging from bossa nova to 1930s French gypsy jazz; Thomas leads his NeW Quintet with other Temple graduates, a mixture of traditional with avant-garde practices; Saphos seeks to expand her dual vocal and bass chops while updating the Great American Songbook to a modern context; Freedlander produces hip-hop beats while also lending his trumpet talents to accomplished rap producers and emcees; and Nord produces electronic “beat” music that seeks to apply his jazz knowledge base to contemporary sounds. Though Temple is regarded as focusing on a certain musical past to a greater degree than a creative future, and does produce its share of musicians focused on that “tradition,” active and former students nonetheless demonstrate a great degree of agency as individual musicians. Students do not all passively receive a sort of homogenized and canonized set of jazz traditions as has been suggested to be the effect of university jazz programs or of conservatory institutions in general, but actively work to question the validity of those “traditions” while expanding their creative search.

That is not to say that there are not strong institutional influences that affect the thinking of jazz students such as at Temple, but it can be difficult to pin down where exactly certain modes of thought arise. I would contend that Temple's decontextualization of jazz music is not only not unique to jazz schools, but is also consistent with contemporary multicultural ideologies that have pervaded since the Cold War era (Melamed 2011). Though jazz university institutions such as Temple play their own crucial role in shaping jazz music and its canonization, knowledge transmission, and production of active musicians, they ultimately reflect broader trends of post-racial thinking in society. In moving into the university institution, jazz continues its journey towards the autonomous art music realm, where musical knowledge can be passed on, dissected, and challenged by aspiring young musicians. This often comes accompanied by a discourse of deracination, but I will pause before asserting that the activity at Temple University speaks for all university jazz programs. As I have demonstrated, the jazz program at Temple is closely defined by its director, faculty, and surrounding local scene of Philadelphia, while also reflecting broader societal and institutional trends. Additional jazz programs will need to be closely examined to further assess claims that university institutionalization uniformly leads to homogenization and decontextualization. While I would hypothesize that most jazz programs follow a similar conservatory model, even if they place different degrees of emphasis on hard bop "tradition," the situation at each school will inevitably vary depending on the faculty and regional identity. There are certainly many accomplished scholars working in the area of

jazz history and cultural studies, suggesting hope that the conservatory and its art music autonomy can be supplemented by the education of important cultural context.

Though further studies are needed, particularly of the more day-to-day activity occurring in the classroom and at student-led nightclub jam sessions, it is nonetheless clear the central role university education plays in shaping jazz in its modern iteration. The university institutionalization of jazz unsurprisingly enacts many transformations on the way the music is learned, discussed, and appreciated. These processes reflect both the great importance currently placed on university education in general as well as the broader institutional patterns that result in discourses of multicultural post-raciality. In addition to giving insight into these processes of knowledge production and reception as they occur in higher education, more thorough study of the activity at university jazz studies programs can inform our understanding of contemporary American society.

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